

Forgers and Fiction: How Forgery Developed the Novel, 1846-79

Paul Ellis

University College London

Doctor of Philosophy

UMI Number: U602586

All rights reserved

INFORMATION TO ALL USERS

The quality of this reproduction is dependent upon the quality of the copy submitted.

In the unlikely event that the author did not send a complete manuscript and there are missing pages, these will be noted. Also, if material had to be removed, a note will indicate the deletion.



UMI U602586

Published by ProQuest LLC 2014. Copyright in the Dissertation held by the Author.
Microform Edition © ProQuest LLC.

All rights reserved. This work is protected against
unauthorized copying under Title 17, United States Code.



ProQuest LLC
789 East Eisenhower Parkway
P.O. Box 1346
Ann Arbor, MI 48106-1346

Abstract

This thesis argues that real-life forgery cases significantly shaped the form of Victorian fiction. Forgeries of bills of exchange, wills, parish registers or other documents were depicted in at least one hundred novels between 1846 and 1879. Many of these portrayals were inspired by celebrated real-life forgery cases. Forgeries are fictions, and Victorian fiction's representations of forgery were often self-reflexive.

Chapter one establishes the historical, legal and literary contexts for forgery in the Victorian period. Chapter two demonstrates how real-life forgers prompted Victorian fiction to explore its ambivalences about various conceptions of realist representation. Chapter three shows how real-life forgers enabled Victorian fiction to develop the genre of sensationalism. Chapter four investigates how real-life forgers influenced fiction's questioning of its epistemological status in Victorian culture. The final chapter argues that the Tichborne Claimant case of 1872-74 was a forgery case in all but name, and that it took representations of forgery in fiction away from issues of writing (and into those of the body); in consequence, forgery's importance to the Victorian novel decreased.

The thesis considers the forgery cases of the Rev. Dr. William Bailey, John Sadleir, Henry Savery, Thomas Powell, Thomas Provis, Lady Ricketts, William Roupell, the Tichborne Claimant and Thomas Griffiths Wainewright. At least one novel by each of the following authors is discussed in some detail: Bulwer-Lytton, Collins, Dickens, Gaskell, Richard Harris, G. P. R. James, John Lang, Le Fanu, Reade, Emma Robinson, Thackeray, Trollope and Wood.

The thesis concludes that, by the mid-1850s, representations of forgery began to exhibit Victorian fiction's confidence in its form rather than its anxiety about it;

and that the reasons for this development related not only to the cultural production and consumption of Victorian fiction between 1846 and 1879, but also to the nature of the influential real-life forgery cases themselves.

Contents

Preface	6
Acknowledgements	7
1. Introduction	9
1.1 Forgery in Victorian Fiction	9
1.2 Forgery, Legal Discourse, and the Novel	25
1.3 Literary Inspiration: the Legacy of Romanticism	55
1.4 Summary	64
2. Forgers and Realisms	79
2.1 Thomas Griffiths Wainewright, <i>Lucretia</i> , and the Forgeries of Mimesis	81
2.2 The Rev. Dr. William Bailey and <i>The Forgery</i> : Forged Bills and Forged Words	96
2.3 Bailey, <i>Ruth</i> , and the Reality of Deceit	114
2.4 Thomas Powell and <i>David Copperfield</i> : Forging Time	121
2.5 Powell, <i>Philip</i> , and Misreadings	129
2.6 Conclusion	140
3. Forgers and Sensationalisms	152
3.1 Thomas Provis and <i>Great Expectations</i> : Forging Gothic	154
3.2 Lady Ricketts and <i>Orley Farm</i> : Equivocating Over Sensationalism's Eroticism	169
3.3 Fragments of Forgers: <i>Wylder's Hand</i> 's Supernaturalising of	

	5
Sensationalism	181
3.4 The Knock-On Effect of Real-Life Forgery: <i>Madeleine Graham's</i>	
Rewriting of Madeleine Smith as a Forger	190
3.5 Conclusion	204
4. Forgers, Novels, and Discourses	217
4.1 Henry Savery, <i>The Forger's Wife</i> , and the English Romance:	
Forging Discourse	223
4.2 Provis, <i>The Woman in White</i> , and the Insignificance of Discursive	
Illegitimacy	241
4.3 John Sadleir, <i>Little Dorrit</i> , and <i>The Way We Live Now</i> : Merdle,	
Melmotte, and Mythologies of Forging Discourse	248
4.4 William Roupell and <i>Mayfair to Millbank</i> : Is There an Issue Here?	264
4.5 Conclusion	273
5. Conclusion: the Tichborne Forger and the Tichborne Novels	284
5.1 How the Tichborne Trials Amplified Forgery for Victorian Fiction	287
5.2 <i>The Wandering Heir, Is He Popenjoy?</i> , and <i>Within the Maze</i> :	
New Directions for Real-life Forgery	292
5.3 Conclusion	301
Works Cited	309

Preface

Anyone with even a casual knowledge of Collins, Dickens and Trollope can probably recall several fictional forgers: Sir Percival Glyde, Uriah Heep, Mr. Merdle, Lady Mason, and perhaps Melmotte. Other Victorian fictional forgers might be less easy to name, such as Dick Bradshaw (in Gaskell's *Ruth*), Gabriel Varney (in Bulwer-Lytton's *Lucretia; or, The Children of Night*), Dr. George Brand Firmin (in Thackeray's *The Adventures of Philip*), or Captain Stanley Lake (in Le Fanu's *Wylder's Hand*). A trawl of sensation fiction – the novels of Ellen Wood and Mary Elizabeth Braddon, for instance – yields more examples. Most fictional forgers lay buried, however, in dusty volumes in the British Library or the Bodleian.

Though well suited to sensation fiction (largely by their secretive and white-collar criminality), fictional forgers may be found in any genre. The subject matter of Victorian fiction is essentially Victorian society.¹ And fictional forgers are society criminals, illegally manipulating the documentation of life processes or the intricate workings of finance and commerce. Outwardly respectable, they personify Victorian society's doubts about the trustworthiness of its complex and growing systems of records and paper credit. Victorian newspapers regularly impressed upon their readers the notion that forgery was a real and ever-present threat to business and home. Fictional forgers were firmly rooted in Victorian reality.

So who were the real-life forgers who inspired Victorian authors to introduce fictional forgers into their novels? How exactly did Victorian fiction engage with these *causes célèbres*? To which literary purposes did Victorian fiction put real-life forgery and why? How, and to what extent, did real-life forgers determine the linguistic fabric of literary texts? These are the kinds of questions I set out to explore

in my thesis. Some of them call for historical scholarship; others demand a theoretical perspective that has faith in the self-reflexivity of novels. I consequently draw on approaches from both ends of the critical spectrum (and view this endeavour less as a dark art than simply as an effective way of illuminating my topic).

To investigate how real-life forgery developed the Victorian novel is to travel on two interconnected routes: style (chiefly, realisms and sensationalisms) and epistemology (how fiction relates, as a source of knowledge, to the world it represents). The journey is through Victorian forgery's cultural hinterland, parts of which - the crises of criminality and credit exchange in the 1840s, for example - can easily be anticipated. Much of the terrain, however, was annexed to the concept of forgery by Victorian fiction itself. A representation of forgery in a Victorian novel might be located in any number of surprising socio-political contexts: changes in conceptions of time in the 1840s, the rhetorical positioning of the fallen woman in the early 1850s, or parliamentary politics around the time of the 1867 Reform Act.

This is a landscape peopled by outlaws or outsiders: impostors, illegitimate offspring, financial swindlers, and poisoners. All commit *the* crime of writing: forgery: a criminalized version of the sign system that constitutes Victorian fiction's own being. How could Victorian fiction fail to be fascinated by forgery? Real-life forgery was Victorian fiction's illegitimate kin, a dark double that could disclose much about Victorian fiction's own identities.

Acknowledgements

I should like to thank the following people: my supervisors at University College London, Professor John Sutherland and Dr. Charlotte Mitchell, whose guidance and advice have been invaluable; my partner, Samantha Peters, for her unstinting support

and keen interest in Victorian fiction; all those who taught me on the Victorian Studies M.A. course at Birkbeck College, for providing me with a sure stepping stone to Ph.D. research in Victorian literature; Professor Karl Miller, for over thirteen years of encouragement in my various endeavours; my past and present pupils at University College School, whose enthusiasm for English has continually reinforced my own; my colleagues there, without whose intellectual companionship I would be significantly poorer; the Principal and Fellows of St. Hugh's College, Oxford, for offering me a Schoolteacher Fellowship between April and August 2003; and the Headmaster of University College School, Mr. Kenneth Durham, for granting me sabbatical leave to take up this award. I am also very grateful to the AHRB for funding my research. Finally, I should like to thank the library staff at the following institutions: Birkbeck College Library; the Bodleian Library; the British Library at Colindale and St. Pancras; Hertfordshire Archives and Records Office, Hertford; the Maughan Library, King's College, London; St. Hugh's College Library, Oxford; University College London Library; the University of London Institute of Advanced Legal Studies Library; the University of London Library, Senate House.

1. Introduction

1.1 Forgery in Victorian Fiction

Of all crimes, forgery is the one most obviously connected to the invention, distribution and reception of fiction. For the Victorian novel, forgery is almost invariably about writing (passing off one person's script or signature as another's), very occasionally about counterfeiting (the illegal craft of creating false currency), sometimes about putting a forged bill or banknote into circulation (the felony of uttering), and nearly always about credibility (whether the forgery will be accepted as the genuine). Forgeries are fictions and, more problematically, vice versa. Victorian fiction's imitations are obviously unlike forgeries of currency or legal documentation.² Nevertheless, in focusing ideas of imitation, plausibility, authenticity, and deception, a novel's representation of forgery implicitly questions the legitimacy of that novel's own representations.³ Unpacking this statement, however, involves not only the consideration of questions of theory and methodology, but also of several literary and cultural factors: the character of Victorian fiction's portrayals of forgery; the place of forgery in Victorian legal discourse; and the relation between forgery, Victorian newspapers, and Victorian novels.

The generic ubiquity of forgery

References to forgery are remarkably common in Victorian fiction. Written by established names and newcomers of both sexes (sometimes anonymously or under pseudonyms), ranging across no fewer than twenty-two publishing houses, appearing in voluminous and often serialized format, and attracting all shades of contemporary

critical comment, novels in which forgery appears occupy virtually every style known to the genre. In one direction lies the terrain of the Gothic, the Newgate novel, melodrama, the historical romance, mystery, and the sensation novel: *The Star-Chamber* (1854), by W. Harrison Ainsworth; *Cleve Hall*, by Elizabeth M. Sewell (1855); *Life's Chances* (anon., 1856); *The Second Wife* (anon., 1857); George Hatton Colomb's *Hearths and Watchfires* (1862); Mary Elizabeth Braddon's *Eleanor's Victory* (1863); Joseph Sheridan Le Fanu's *The Tenants of Malory* (1867); or Wilkie Collins's *Poor Miss Finch* (1872). In another direction, the fertile soil is the socio-economic: the social problem novel, banking, clerking, business, the family, the novel of manners and of the drawing room: *Maude Talbot* (1854), by Holme Lee (i.e. Harriet Parr); *Claude de Vesci* (anon., 1856); Mark Lemon's *Loved at Last* (1864); Frank Lyfield's *Aubrey Court* (1865); Morley Farrow's *After Baxtow's Death* (1870); Anthony Trollope's *Sir Harry Hotspur of Humblethwaite* (1870); and Elizabeth Eiloart's *From Thistles – Grapes?* (1870). Of course, many of the novels that depict forgery, such as *Bella Donna; or the Cross before the Name* (1864), by Gilbert Dyce (i.e. Percy Fitzgerald) or Edmund Yates's *Land at Last* (1866), lie towards or in the middle ground. Occasionally, forgery would colonise new territory, as in Wilkie Collins's *The Moonstone* (1868), the first detective novel.

To some extent this topography is an illusion. Although much Victorian literary criticism referred to “schools” of writing (characterised by certain stylistic traits and usually headed by a particular author), or made fine distinctions between, say, a romance and a realist novel, the generic landscape of the Victorian novel was, in fact, fairly fluid. Addressing the matter in the mid-seventies, Trollope railed against those critics who categorised novelists as either “sensational” or “realistic” (*Autobiography* 146). But Victorian critics chiefly used such distinctions as a

shorthand way of indicating the sort of reading experience that a reader might, on the whole, expect from one of the many new novels on offer.⁴ (Typically, but certainly not exclusively, novelists and reviewers envisaged the reader as a middle-class person who read three-volume novels borrowed from Mudie's circulating library.⁵) Unlike most twenty-first century readers, Victorian readers were exposed to a remarkably wide range of Victorian novels. To survey how forgery was portrayed not only in canonical Victorian novels, but also in Victorian novels that are today under-read, half-forgotten or totally neglected, is to partake a little, perhaps, in the richness of the Victorian experience of reading about forgery in fictional narratives.

Forgery was instrumental in shaping a number of novels that were very popular with Victorians.⁶ In G. P. R. James's *The Smuggler* (1845), Robert Radford uses forged evidence to blackmail a young maiden into marrying his son. Unless she complies, her father, Sir Robert, faces execution. Here, the device prepares the way for a daring rescue and Radford's suicide. Gabriel Varney, one of the two villains in Bulwer-Lytton's Newgate Novel, *Lucretia* (1846, rev. 1853), is transported for forgery: his just deserts for a varied and spectacular – and, in the opinion of contemporary critics, worryingly enticing – display of criminality. In Wilkie Collins's *Basil* (1852, rev. 1862), Mannion seduces a young married girl, and consequently engages in a protracted struggle to the death with the wronged husband. The fact that Mannion is the son of a forger would not have been lost on Victorians. (Was his bad behaviour in the blood?) In the hugely successful bigamy novel, *George Geith of Fen Court* (1864), by F. G. Trafford (i.e. Charlotte Riddell), George is acquitted of bigamy when it is proved that his first wife had forged her own death certificate. In Collins's *Armadale* (1866), the first of Lydia Gwilt's stepping-stones towards evil is forgery (committed when she is twelve). In *Foul Play* (1868), by Charles Reade and Dion

Boucicault, the hero, Robert Penfold, is transported for forgery, a miscarriage of justice that sets up the future action. On the return voyage, Penfold (now released) becomes unwittingly embroiled in a ship-scuttling incident, a scandalous deed that was then much in the public eye. One could easily go on citing examples. Victorians found forgery-based novels such as these compelling.

It is equally striking, though, that forgery is the mainspring of many canonical Victorian novels. In *David Copperfield* (1849-50), the exposure of Uriah Heep's forgeries (by Micawber and Traddles) enables justice to prevail and helps clear the way for David's union with Agnes. Dickens's satire of fifties society in *Little Dorrit* (1855-57) rests on the fact of Merdle's forgeries. In *The Woman in White* (1859-60), Glyde's forgery of a parish register conceals the secret of his illegitimacy: the crime is Hartwright's key to the mystery of the woman in white. In *Great Expectations* (1860-61), the web of references to forgers, forgery and forging insists upon Pip's forged nature as a gentleman. (Not only is Pip the gentleman created out of Magwitch's manual labour, but he is also a fraud, betraying his working-class origins at every turn.) Almost the entire plot of *Orley Farm* (1861-62) is built upon Lady Mason's forgery of a codicil to a will. And when we read of Melmotte's forgery in *The Way We Live Now* (1874-75), we realise that this is the point towards which the share-dealing plot has been moving all along. Most canonical Victorian novelists wrote about forgery at some stage in their careers, some several times.

When looking for examples of forgery in Victorian fiction, one is literally spoilt for choice. In my view, any sample should indicate the vast range of Victorian novels *available* to Victorian readers with forgery in mind, regardless of quality, sales figures, or long-term reputation. One can only begin to understand a river by exploring its depths, shallows, and shifting currents. What I propose for the argument

of my thesis, therefore, is a series of samples that duly acknowledge core Victorian novels, but which are also generous to the claims of minor Victorian fiction.

Fictional forgers and cultural contexts: a brief survey

So, which backdrops for fictional forgery might the Victorian reader with forgery in mind have encountered? Favourite locations include the metropolis (the epicentre of Victorian crime) and the Celtic fringes (where savage landscapes are catalysts for wild deeds). Yates's *Running the Gauntlet* (1865) is set in London, Thomas Hood's *A Disputed Inheritance* (1863) in Cornwall, and F. G. Trafford's (i.e. Charlotte Riddell's) *Maxwell Drewitt* (1865) in Connemara. More specifically, forgeries are often committed in buildings or rooms that imbue the crime with symbolic significance. In *The Woman in White* (1859-60), Sir Percival Glyde commits his forgery in the vestry. To conceal his illegitimacy, he forges an entry in the parish register. The falsified record shows that his parents were married before his birth. By being performed after their deaths and on holy ground, Glyde's forgery is framed in the narrative as a sacrilegious script. His death by fire in the vestry has a symmetry that bespeaks divine retribution.⁷ In *Orley Farm* (1862), Lady Mason commits the forgery of a codicil to her husband's will in "his house" (2: 46). Her crime is thereby located within a wider context of women's requisitions of male spaces of power.

Although the majority of forgers in Victorian fiction are men, there is a sizeable group of female forgers. A few are sympathetically portrayed, such as Lady Mason, Alice Vivian in the anonymous *Altogether Wrong* (1863), or the heroine of Frances Hoey's *A Golden Sorrow* (1872). But many of these women are conventionally villainous, such as the eponymous protagonist of Emma Robinson's *Madeleine Graham* (1864), the first Mrs. Geith in Charlotte Riddell's *George Geith of*

Fen Court (1864), and Bella in Emma Carolina Wood's *On Credit* (1870). Framed by the 1857 Divorce Act (which added desertion as a ground for divorce and made divorce a matter for the civil courts), or the 1870 Married Women's Property Act (which allowed women to keep their own earnings), such novels often contain feminist critiques of mid-Victorian patriarchy, and particularly of the socio-economic and legal positions of women in relation to marriage. Forgery was a common site on which Victorian fiction addressed this issue. In *The Ex-Wife* (1859), by the barrister John Lang, for example, a character asks, on learning that her husband has forged her signature, "But is not the use of my name a forgery?" (196). The bank official replies (patronizingly), "Not in law, madame. A husband cannot, in law, defraud his wife of money or chattels, inasmuch as a man cannot defraud himself, and what is the wife's is legally the husband's. Do you not see?" (ibid.). Forgery offered the gender politics of Victorian fiction a dynamic of usurpation. The female forger could convey Victorian women's desire for equal property rights, while simultaneously drawing attention to the fact that society had made such a position unlawful. Forgery by women in Victorian fiction often functions less as a crime than as a symbolic act: the righteous – but illegal – appropriation of property.⁸

Whether male or female, fictional forgers are generally middle or upper class. They are literate, knowledgeable about such matters as wills and the various forms of credit, and disposed by their background to the more genteel kinds of criminality. (Working-class fictional forgers are generally associated with coining, a separate felony, involving messy manual work, that is far less commonly shown in respectable Victorian fiction.⁹) While Joseph Wilmot in Braddon's *Henry Dunbar: the Story of an Outcast* (1864) is a lowly bank messenger,¹⁰ Jack Shelburne in the anonymous *Belial* (1865) is a roguish gentleman, Percival in Walter Stephen's *Superior to Adversity; or,*

the Romance of a Clouded Life (1864) is a physician (of sorts), Rencliffe in John Pomeroy's (i.e. Mrs. A. D. Pollard's) *A Double Secret* (1870) is a lord, and Tilbury in John Cordy Jeaffreson's *A Woman in Spite of Herself* (1872) is a major.¹¹ Victorian readers were fearful of, and excited by, the idea of the gentleman's loss of reputation.¹² On hearing that a fellow barrister had been convicted of forgery, an anonymous contributor to *Notes and Queries* wrote in 1869, "it is [...] incredible that one who belonged to the higher or middle classes of society should, after his call, have sunk, not merely into casual crime, but into the habitual degradation of the 'flash-ken'" ("Jem the Penman"). Forgers did not generally have a recognisably criminal appearance. When Leopold Redpath (a notorious City forger) appeared in court, it was reported, "There was little of the criminal about him [...] and some indeed seemed to think he was somewhat out of place in the felon's dock" (Evans, *Facts, Failures, and Frauds* 447). Victorian fiction's portrayal of mainly middle-class forgers thus exploited Victorian concerns about respectability, reputation, and public standards.¹³

Furthermore, each middle-class occupation represented by these novels of forgery invoked a specific cultural domain. In *Phoebe, Junior* (1876), for example, the clergyman Mr. May forges the signature of a retired buttermaker, Tozer, on a bill. Tozer confronts Mr. May with the crime, who "gaze[s] at him with wild terror and agony" (324). Previously, Tozer had regarded Mr. May - "the gentleman" - "as being upon an elevation very different from his own, altogether above and beyond him [...] [a] superior being" (ibid.). On seeing Mr. May "thus humbled," Tozer cries, "God help us all!" (ibid.). What did middle-class Victorian readers make of Oliphant's forgery episode? Curiously, the *Saturday Review*'s response to Mr. May's crime was one of denial:

[...] when Mrs. Oliphant makes a clergyman, respected in his own town, a man of family, intellectual, a writer of 'thoughtful papers' in religious periodicals, considered to have a deep knowledge of the human heart, and preaching better sermons than any other clergyman in Carlingford, commit a forgery merely to get himself out of an ordinary money difficulty, and he thinks no more about it till the day of discovery comes [...] we must take exception to the probability of the transaction. (112-13)

In rejecting the credibility of this representation of a clergyman forger on the grounds of its improbability, the *Saturday* – like Oliphant herself – neatly evaded the theological ramifications of Mr. May's crime.¹⁴ A respected local clergyman was not only the official guardian of registers of births, marriages and deaths; he was also the people's guarantor of the validity of sacred texts. In forging one of society's mundane texts, Mr. May implicitly shakes his congregation's faith in the validity of all those texts with which he is associated. In the 1860s, the theological shockwaves of German bible scholarship had already done much to weaken faith in the trustworthiness of biblical authority (Wheeler 14-15). To an extent, Oliphant's clergyman forger is symptomatic of this cultural concern.¹⁵

Far more commonly, however, Victorians would have known forgery solely as an economic crime. Even literary-based journals ran articles on financial forgery. While their readers were led to acknowledge the forger's boldness or talent, they were also forced to recognise the degrees of national destabilisation that could result from his crimes. In 1850, *Household Words* published "Two Chapters on Bank Note Forgeries."¹⁶ A decade later, *All The Year Round* published "Convict Capitalists" and "Very Singular Things in the City," both of which wryly discussed the economic damage wrought by City forgery. The most impressive of these City forgers, perhaps, was the innocent-looking Redpath. He had defrauded the Great Northern Railway Company, of which he was Registrar, by forging fictitious signatures on share

certificates. With these names, he invented £240,000 of stock, most of which he then sold on.¹⁷

In 1873, the Bank of England unwittingly discounted over £100,000 of forged bills of exchange – around £30,000,000 in today’s money (D. Thomas 237).¹⁸ The *Saturday Review* reported: “it was felt that a serious blow had been struck at the foundations of commercial confidence and security [...]” (“The Forged Bills” 313). The journal asked, “If the Bank of England could be bitten in this way, who was safe?” (ibid.). The use of “bitten” here is more than proverbial, and suggests how the emotional response triggered by the idea of financial forgery could change over time. In 1839, Carlyle had exclaimed, “Cash Payment has become the sole nexus of man to man!” (“Chartism” 289). Thirty-four years later, the *Saturday* not only alluded to Carlyle’s analysis of human relations (i.e. they are essentially economic), but also to Darwin’s argument in *The Descent of Man* (1871): that man had evolved from the higher primates. In the 1870s, in the darkest corners of the popular imagination, the forger was one who betrayed his animal origins; he was gnawing at the economic fibres that held individuals – and society - together.

The fear of the financial ruin wrought by forgery reverberates throughout many Victorian novels, of whichever decade.¹⁹ *Little Dorrit* (1855-57), for example, clearly associates forgery – via Merdle - with financial speculation and the debtors’ prison. In his 1857 preface to the novel, Dickens said that he had “never had so many readers” (6). There were many reasons for this success. But one was surely that, in *Little Dorrit*, Dickens’s own experience of the debtors’ prison (when his father was imprisoned at the Marshalsea in 1824) powerfully met his readership’s fears.²⁰

Although the Marshalsea had closed in 1842, and by 1877 only three per cent of those in jail were debtors (compared to sixty per cent in 1776), the Queen’s Prison, which

was exclusively for debtors, did not close until 1862 (McConville 278). These fears of the debtors' prison were well grounded. Mid-Victorian investments were notoriously precarious. There was, the pre-eminent Victorian legal historian James Fitzjames Stephen noted, "no law to punish fraudulent trustees proper till 1857," and "no law to punish the falsification of accounts, except in a few special cases, till 1875" (*History* 3: 186).

Little Dorrit's readers would have found much to amplify their fears in other fiction of the fifties, too. *David Copperfield* (1850) and *Ruth* (1853) intimate that, behind such outwardly respectable businesses as Mr. Wickfield's law firm, or "Bradshaw and Co., [which] was daily looming larger in the commercial world" (399), there might be a Uriah Heep or Dick Bradshaw forging away unseen in a back room. John R. Reed has indicated just how many Victorian novels drew on the financial panics or crises of 1825, 1836, 1847, 1857, 1863, 1866 and 1873 ("A Friend to Mammon").²¹ To Reed's list of novels may be added a sub-stratum depicting forgery, made up of such titles as Henrietta Jenkin's *Violet Bank and its Inmates* (1858), *Secrets of My Office*, "By a Bill-Broker" (1863), John Edwardson's *Hollowhill Farm* (1871), or Jeaffreson's *Lottie Darling* (1873).

In Victorian fiction, no sphere of Victorian society was safe from the forger. Novels even showed their readers how forgery could destroy the harmony of the home, the inward and idealised side of Victorian society.²² There, forgery usually severs male familial bonds, turning father against son.²³ In G. P. R. James's *The Forgery* (1849), a father forges a bill of exchange and manoeuvres his son into the position of prime suspect. Anne Marsh's *The Wilmingtons* (1850) treads a similar path, but on this occasion the son, Henry Wilmington, nobly allows himself to be sentenced to execution for his father's forgery. Robert Mannion, in Wilkie Collins's

Basil: A Story of Modern Life (1852), suffers socially for his father's past crime of forgery. In Margaret Paull's *Still Waters* (1857), Jasper Clinton's father, a convicted forger, returns from transportation to harass his son's efforts to lead an upstanding and honourable life. In Thackeray's *The Adventures of Philip* (1862), Philip's dastardly father, Dr. George Brand Firmin, forges Philip's signature in order to blackmail more money out of him. The eponymous protagonist of *Paul Wynter's Sacrifice* (1869), by Mary Hardy, likewise lives under the shadow of his forger father. Sometimes, though, the son is the scoundrel, as in Elizabeth Gaskell's *Ruth* (1853), John Bradford's *Roger Whatmough's Will* (1864), and Ellen Wood's *Oswald Cray* (1864). These plots plainly played upon readers' fears of family strife, estrangement, or disintegration.

Although fictional forgers belonged to a particular socio-economic group or cultural domain, Victorian readers were clearly encouraged to engage with them as though they were types of individuals. Different forgers commit forgery for different reasons and to varying degrees of guilt. There is the unscrupulous and amoral opportunist who commits a single forgery for a specific purpose: to get a property, a sum of money, or to pay off debts. Mr. Wilmington in *The Wilmingtons* (1850) is one such character. Other forgers are habitual deceivers. In Le Fanu's *Wylder's Hand* (1864), Stanley Lake's forgeries merely continue his lies in another medium. For Lancelot in Mary Elizabeth Braddon's *Eleanor's Victory* (1863), for Lydia Gwilt in Wilkie Collins's *Armadale* (1866), and for William Noyes in Emma Pickering's *Firm in the Struggle* (1872), forgery is merely one crime of convenience among many. Some forgers, though, are the unfortunate instruments of others' machinations. In Braddon's *Henry Dunbar* (1864), the eponymous protagonist manipulates his social inferior, Joseph Wilmot, into forging Lord Vanlorme's acceptance of a bill. Several forgers forge out of desperation, like Stephen Hayley in G. P. R. James's *The Forgery*

(1849). A few seem truly remorseful, like Mr. May in *Phoebe, Junior* (1876).

Occasionally, the man accused of forgery turns out to be innocent, as in Edward Dutton Cook's *The Trials of the Tredgolds* (1864) or William Wilson's *Andrew Ramsay of Errol* (1865). Sometimes, a narrative could condone a character's act of forgery. In Elise Thorp's *Come of Her Vow* (1874), Eustace Vale's document forgeries are presented – like Lady Mason's will-forgery - as having been committed for the best of motives. (This narrative stance was, however, deemed fanciful by the *Athenaeum*'s reviewer.) Though representative, these characters had their own stories.

Conceptualising forgery in Victorian fiction: key motifs

The personal details of a character's story, moreover, carried the key motifs by which Victorian fiction conceptualised forgery. Predominantly, these were illegitimacy, imposture, and poison. In *Ruth* (1853) and *The Woman in White* (1859-60), for instance, forgery becomes entangled with the figure of the bastard. Before the law, neither counted as genuine; both were of dubious provenance. Nineteenth-century illegitimacy rates were at their height in the 1840s, and the Bastardy Clauses of the New Poor Law, and their amendments, gave the issue a sharp legal and political focus between 1834 and 1872 (Teichman 60-67).²⁴ But while Leonard (Ruth's illegitimate child) and Dick Bradshaw's forgery are presented with narrative sympathy, both the illegitimate Glyde and his forgery are designed to attract mainly scorn. The difference may be partly explained by the generic destinations of each text. *Ruth* is a social problem novel. It remonstrates against society's treatment of fallen women by asking: how can society forgive Dick Bradshaw his foolish forgery, and yet deny Ruth forgiveness for her foolish – and less culpable – kind of illegitimate reproduction? In

Ruth, forgery is swept up in Gaskell's strategy to promote sympathy for unmarried mothers. Collins's sensation novel, on the other hand, sublimates its interest in society's attitudes towards illegitimacy (and fallen women such as Glyde's mother) in the plot-driven necessity of providing a convincing motive for the villain's forgery: the covering up of a shameful secret.

A second important forgery-related motif in Victorian fiction is the impostor. Although various real-life claimant cases nourished this interest throughout the Victorian period, the Tichborne Claimant had by far the greatest impact.²⁵ An Australian butcher who claimed the Tichborne baronetcy and estates in 1867, the Claimant lost his claim in 1872 and was convicted of perjury in 1874. By and large, the impostor plot depicted and analysed society's anxieties about shifting class relations around the time of the 1867 Reform Act.²⁶ These changes can be put crudely; they were often felt so by Victorians. From the viewpoint of the established landed elite, self-made businessmen were seeking to inveigle their way into the upper classes.²⁷ Likewise, the middle classes felt encroached upon by the lower classes, which were steadily adapting themselves to middle-class ideals and modes of behaviour. Most dramatically, there was always the possibility that the working classes might infiltrate the highest reaches of society.²⁸ In those impostor plots involving forgery, the crime becomes less a financial one, than a constituent part of socio-economically motivated identity fraud. And yet, forgery in these novels also acquires a parallel magnitude of its own. In Frank Lyfield's *Aubrey Court* (1865), Charlotte Riddell's *Maxwell Drewitt* (1865), and Mary Cecil Hay's *Victor and Vanquished* (1874), for example, the forgeries help define the false claimants around which their plots revolve. Connected to a claimant, a forged signature on a will exudes the confident bluster of the impostor. Such novels often invited both alarm at

the sociological significance of the crime and a sneaking admiration for the daring of its perpetrator.

Perhaps most vivid of all, however, is forgery's association with poison in the Victorian period. This was fixed early in the public mind by such *causes célèbres* as Thomas Griffiths Wainewright, whom the authorities had tried for forgery in 1837 (when they really wanted to make a poisoning charge stick), and William Palmer, who was convicted for poisoning in 1856 (but who had also committed several forgeries).²⁹ This variation in emphasis is also characteristic of the fiction of the period. Whereas in Emma Robinson's *Madeleine Graham* (1864), the poisoner is coincidentally a forger, in the anonymous *Belial* (1865), the forger administers a laudanum overdose to the victim of his forgery as a kind of logical afterthought. The forger in Frank Lee Benedict's *Mr. Vaughan's Heir* (1874), however, uses opium – a Victorian poison, medicine, and recreational drug – to feed his own addiction. In Walter Stephen's *Superior to Adversity* (1864), the forger and poisoner more obviously connects forgery to medicine, passing himself off as a physician. Forgery finds in this group of novels a metaphor not only for its curative and intoxicating qualities, but also for its degeneracy and destructiveness.

The world of fictional forgery: conclusion

Considered collectively, these aforementioned novels insist that forgery's effects on society could be catastrophic. Forgery in Victorian fiction conjures up a terrifyingly unstable version of Victorian society, one that must have been given credibility by the recurrent forgery-triggered financial crises of the period. As the thousands defrauded by Merdle and Melmotte are meant to show, victims of forgers and their related

criminal activities could lose everything. Similarly, a number of those Victorians who read *Phoebe, Junior* would have recalled the case of a Middlesborough clergyman who had, in 1873, forged joint-stock scrip to the sum of £20,000 or £30,000 (“The Forged Bills” 313). The likes of Mr. May did exist. Forgery panicked Victorians in a way that perhaps we underestimate today. In the words of one Victorian pamphleteer, forgery is to be numbered among those “offences” that “strike at the very root of social position, the security of property, all reliance upon professional probity, personal integrity, public trust, [and] private confidence [...]” (Higginson 3). His list is a hierarchy of anxiety, with social status at the top. Forgery threatened to dismantle the entire Victorian system of values and socio-economic relations.

If a Victorian reader could have been physically transported into the world of these novels, she – and, given men’s formal dominance in the official paperwork of life, especially he – would surely have become paranoid within days. In this most fictional of fictional worlds, one is best not to trust a document written by one’s spouse, son, father, banker, doctor, lawyer or clergyman. No place, from one’s home to one’s parish church, was sacrosanct. Any cheque, bill, banknote, promissory note or official register was likely to be a fraudulent simulation of that which it purported to be. Even one’s own texts – such as a last will and testament – could, in a forged signature, be usurped at any moment. This fictional Victorian society could support, to an alarming extent, such plausible fictions as Lucius Mason’s lawful ownership of Orley Farm, the existence of Thurston Benson’s shares, or Percival Glyde’s authentically being a baronet. The legal and socio-economic texts in, by, and through which, Victorian society existed were here extraordinarily unreliable.

Although routinely occurring in the world conjured up by these novels, forgery was also a sensational crime, often committed by glamorous characters.

Forgery could be numbered as “one of those charming vices” (181), as the narrator of Samuel Sidney’s “A Fashionable Forger” (1851) casually remarks. By the sixties – the decade of sensationalism – fiction did indeed often imagine forgery less as a crime than as a vice. The number of novels featuring forgery peaked in this period. Unlike the other sensational crimes - bigamy, poisoning and murder - forgery offered middle-class Victorian readers, both male and female, the excitement of a criminal act that they might, conceivably, quickly perform themselves with just a few strokes of a pen. If readers feared that they would at some time become victims of forgery, they could also enjoy the seductive notion that they might easily acquire the thrilling persona of the sensational forger themselves. And if they could entertain the idea, they might, of course, subsequently wonder which of their outwardly respectable friends – the Merdles, Melmottes, Sir Percivals or Lady Masons of their own acquaintance – were actually committing the crime for real. Before giving the example of the recently discovered forgeries of John Sadleir, MP, *Blackwood’s* observed in 1857, “there is always a skeleton in the closet” (Aytoun 230). The Victorian reader’s indulgent fantasy of forging would inevitably have had a sting in its tail.

From the standpoints of both the victim and perpetrator of forgery, then, these novels questioned the reliability of the structuring and socialising texts of the Victorian reader’s own familiar world. Insidiously, they sought to collapse boundaries between the novel and real-life. It could be argued that these novels lanced the boils of genuine Victorian anxiety about real-life forgery.³⁰ But the obsessive repetition of the crime in Victorian fiction suggests that, if this was so, then such relief as each novel afforded was only temporary. Continual treatment was required on almost all the major parts of Victorian society: religion, commerce, and the family. In the long view, fictional forgery appears to have busied itself with prodding, probing and

inflaming Victorian society's deep-rooted fears about how forgery could reverse fact and fiction, truth and falsehood, desire and reality.

1.2 Forgery, Legal Discourse, and the Novel

In brutal recognition of forgery's profoundly subversive power, the law prior to Victoria's accession had hanged forgers. The law saw clearly what societal chaos lay in wait behind a forged "instrument." Following a series of financial frauds in the 1720s,³¹ forgery was made a capital offence in 1729 (Emsley 255). In *A History of the Criminal Law of England* (1883), James Fitzjames Stephen recorded, with a telling pun, that, "[n]o part of the criminal law of the latter part of the eighteenth century was more severe in itself, or was executed with greater severity [than the laws of forgery]" (3: 182). This harshness he attributed to Britain's determination to maintain the dependability of its recently introduced paper currency, and to secure its growing commercial empire (ibid.).³² Forgery corroded the world's trust and confidence in the financial system on which Britain's prosperity was built.³³ The judicial "severity" that the crime attracted continued well into the early part of the nineteenth century. Between 1812-18 in London and Middlesex, of the eighty-four convicted of forgery, forty-seven were executed. For highway robbery, the ratio was one hundred and ninety-six to seventeen – a percentage of 55.9 per cent compared to 8.6 per cent (Emsley: table 10.2, 258).³⁴

Forgery in Victorian law

Owing generally to humanitarian arguments and the pragmatic need to secure more convictions, forgery ceased, in stages, to become a capital offence.³⁵ Subsequent to Peel's bill in 1830 for the repeal of the death penalty for forgery, the various enactments were consolidated in an attempt to specify which kinds of forgery should remain capital. These included forging several types of official seal, exchequer bills, banknotes, wills, bills of exchange, promissory notes, payment orders, false entries with regard to public funds, and various kinds of documents relating to stock transfers. In 1837, the death penalty was abolished for all cases of forgery apart from the forging of public seals (abolished in 1861), and replaced by penal servitude (Stephen, *History* 3: 183-85).

Although forgery lacked a statutory definition (Stephen, *History* 3: 186), Victorian case law gives some idea of what the law understood by forgery. *R. v. Hill* (1837) ruled that even though a forger might have tried to prevent any loss to another that might have arisen from his forgery, the intention to defraud was what defined his act as forgery (Turner and Armitage 600). *R. v. Closs* (1858) ruled that a forgery ““must be of some document or writing,”” as opposed to a mark (ibid. 592). *R. v. Smith* (1858) concluded that ““Forgery supposes the possibility of a genuine document, and that the false document is not so good as the genuine document, and that the one is not so efficacious for all purposes as the other”” (ibid. 593). *R. v. William Ritson and Samuel Ritson* (1869) ruled that ““When an instrument professes to be executed at a date different from that at which it really was executed, and the false date is material to the operation of the deed, if the false date is inserted knowingly and with a fraudulent intent, it is a forgery at common law”” (ibid. 595).

Defined not only by concepts of genuineness and illegitimate copying, but also by details of intention, use and timing, forgery was a strikingly complex and mercurial crime, a phantasm that could trick the eyes of even the most scrupulous.³⁶ Whether as an act of alteration or fabrication, forgery had a deeply sinister judicial identity. Dependent on pen, paper, and confidence, the Victorian credit system was precarious indeed. Forgery's potential for destabilising this system can readily be grasped from George Robb's lucid exposition of how bills of exchange worked:

The principal instrument of credit during the nineteenth century was the bill of exchange. In its simplest form, a bill of exchange was a promise of payment between two parties. The person responsible for payment was the acceptor and the person to be paid the payee. Payment could be on demand or, as was more common, at some future date [...] Bills were fully negotiable [...] [The payee] might well transfer his bill at a discount to a third party, or endorser – so called because he would endorse the bill by writing his name across it. Bills could be endorsed indefinitely, changing hands many times before payment was due.

Besides having a commercial function, bills could also serve as financial instruments when sold as a means of raising money or offered as collateral for loans. With the growth of banking, the use of bills of exchange was greatly facilitated and discounting bills became a major avenue for the investment of bank funds. Banks bought bills to accommodate businessmen, and for this service, charged interest, or 'discount.' [...] By the mid-nineteenth century, large bill-broking firms [...] were an integral part of English finance, providing bankers with both a channel for investment and a source of funds.
(65-66)

Evidently, this system had the potential for forgery to enter it at numerous points in the form of an unlawful signature, word, numeral, or modification of these aforementioned inscriptions.³⁷ Measures to prevent or detect fraud, moreover, were remarkably lax (Robb 23-27). In this vulnerable multiple exchange system, forgery could turn a bill into a kind of fiscal un-dead. By feeding off living bills (substituting itself for genuine ones), a forged bill could circulate without any vitality (or intrinsic exchange value) of its own. Literally, too, forgery could substitute "false" people for

“genuine” ones. Forgery could turn an official register, a seal, a will, or even a tombstone, into a fraudulent document in support of an inheritance claim.

The stake that law tried to drive through forgery’s heart was a rationalist conception of truth. Forgery could, law believed, be defined, identified and destroyed. As David Philips points out in his discussion of forgery in the period 1835-60, forgery was “among the few cases which were publicly prosecuted by the Government or its agencies” (236). But forgery trials were more than an official procedure for eliminating threats to the life-blood of commerce or property transfer. They staged the ongoing battle between law’s apparently truthful use of writing, and forgery’s demonstrably false use of it.

The letter of Victorian forgery law, however, discloses the anxiety of its spirit in this fight. James Fitzjames Stephen concluded that the “extreme conciseness” of the forgery laws of Germany and France “contrasts strongly with the extraordinary minuteness of the English law” (*History* 3: 187-88). In *A General View of the Criminal Law of England* (1863), he noted that, of the fifty-six sections of the consolidating Act of 1861, “no less than twenty-four consist[ed] of enumerations of particular classes of instruments, which it [was] a felony to forge” (142). English forgery law was unusual in its relentless listing, document by document, of what must not be forged. With respect to property transfer, this was the law’s attempt to redress its inevitable design faults. Forgery law compensated for, as the *Saturday Review* expressed it, “the facility which legal forms, and, we suppose, legal practice gives to crimes of the largest description” (“The Roupell Case” 213). Wills and property deeds could be altered with relative ease, especially as some lawyers were less than scrupulous. Forgery therefore drew out law’s anxiety of form. Behind this technical concern, moreover, lay an institutional and national neurosis, a collective fear of the

forgery-ridden world also envisaged by Victorian fiction, one fostered by the increasingly labyrinthine structure of Victorian finance and commerce.

The common cultures of Victorian fiction and law

The novel and the law were peculiarly entwined in the Victorian period.³⁸ Far more frequently than today, a novel would pass through the hands of the law: written by a novelist who had some legal training,³⁹ reviewed by a practising barrister (often in a journal edited by a qualified barrister), and read by someone either who was a lawyer himself, or who was married (or related) to a lawyer (with whom the reader might easily discuss that novel). Most famously, *Little Dorrit* was written by a former lawyer's clerk, Charles Dickens, and denounced in the press by the young barrister James Fitzjames Stephen for its failure to live up to the law's standards of truth.⁴⁰

This was a reciprocal process, however. In the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, the law had undergone, in John Bender's phrase, "a form of 'novelization'" (176). Put simply, prosecution lawyers and - after the 1836 Prisoners' Counsel Act - defence lawyers narrated competing stories in the criminal courts. Alexander Welsh claims that Fitzjames Stephen "pretty well ceded that each verdict in a trial was equivalent to accepting a certain narrative" (*Strong Representations* 18). Jan-Melissa Schramm argues that some novelists, in turn, saw themselves as ethical legislators – paid professionals, too - in direct competition with lawyers ("Is Literature More Ethical than Law?" 418). She observes how Trollope can find Lady Mason not guilty of forgery in a courtroom because he has subjected her to a more personal and private kind of justice (431).⁴¹ Collins, of course, had done exactly the same with Glyde.

David Skilton's comment on *Orley Farm* could equally apply to many Victorian novels: "[t]he law fails, but the novel sees justice done" (Introduction xiii).⁴²

Victorian fiction and the law were intimate rivals largely for the reason that they had, to some extent, their substance, form and epistemology in common.⁴³ The Victorian novel's staples of family, business and crime involved extensive representations of the law and its agents. Reviewing an anonymous novel in 1859, the *Athenaeum* spoke disparagingly of "crude, inartistic transfers from recent law proceedings" (Rev. of *Sir Gilbert: A Novel*). R. D. McMaster estimates that in Trollope's canon alone there are "about a hundred lawyers of various sorts" (1).⁴⁴ Many novels explicitly appealed to law's customs or procedures through their structures and language, from *Adam Bede*'s analogy of the novel as a "witness-box" (175), to *The Woman in White*'s initial positioning of the reader as a "Judge" (5). And Jonathan H. Grossman has recently explored how the law courts – as material and symbolic buildings - both shaped Victorian novels' conceptualisations of their own narrative structures and influenced their political aims. Deborah Wynne, moreover, has shown how a Victorian family magazine could deliberately juxtapose a serialized novel's representation of forgery with one by a non-fictional and law-related piece (3). In the periodical, fiction could, it seems, speak on equal terms with legal discourse.

Law in fictions of forgery

But, to judge from their novels, how much did Victorian authors actually know about the law? We can confidently assume that Charles Dickens knew that merely passing on a forged banknote was a capital offence in the late eighteenth century. John Willet

in *Barnaby Rudge* (1841) remarks that Hugh's "mother was hung when [Hugh] was a little boy, along with six others, for passing bad notes [...]" (140).⁴⁵ Naturally, authors could misrepresent or mistake the law, as the *Saturday Review* accused Trollope of doing in his portrayal of Lady Mason's trial (Rev. of *Orley Farm*).⁴⁶ Wilkie Collins, on the other hand, probably knew more law than he was sometimes given credit for knowing. In his preface to the 1861 edition of *The Woman in White*, Collins defended himself against the accusation, made in the *Saturday Review*, that he had misunderstood the law. John Sutherland notes, "Presumably what the reviewer meant was that Sir Percival would have a perfect legal right to his wife's £20,000 without going to the trouble of murdering her [...]" (669 n. 3). Sir Percival would certainly have had that right in common law. But equity provided a legal mechanism by which money or property could be left in trust for a wife – which the husband could not touch (Perkin 15-19). Gilmore had apparently arranged such a provision for Laura. While the £20,000 would go to Glyde on Laura's death, she would receive the income from the capital during her lifetime. It is this income that Glyde tries to persuade Laura to sign over to his creditors. Collins did say, in his 1861 preface, that he had carefully checked the legal background to his story with a "solicitor of great experience" (3). There seems to be no good reason to disbelieve him.

The likelihood that Collins did indeed meticulously check his points of law suggests a subtle interpretation of Glyde's forgery. Glyde committed his crime in 1827. In 1830, the statute specifically punishing the forgery of entries in marriage registers (enactment 4 Geo. 4, c. 76, s. 29) was repealed (by 11 Geo. 4 and 1 Will. 4, c. 66, s. 30) (Fitzjames Stephen, *History* 3: 183). While this type of forgery was no longer a capital crime, most others were (until 1837). Glyde's death, considered within the novel's over-determined legal framework, is rendered legally fitting in a

way that it would not have been had Glyde committed the forgery after 1830. When Glyde committed the forgery, the law of the land itself would have demanded his public execution - but only for less than three years afterwards (as opposed to nearly ten years for most other kinds of forgery). Surely this is significant. Had Collins (an exceptionally painstaking and calculating novelist) planned it so in order to indicate the narrow margin by which Glyde deserved to die? In Mrs. Catherick's narrative, Collins awkwardly directs his readers to the legal history of forgery: "In those days, the law was not so tender-hearted as I hear it is now. Murderers were not the only people liable to be hanged [...]" (545). (Who, one wonders, would discuss with Mrs. Catherick, "now," the recent changes in forgery law?) Many of Collins's lawyerly readers, at least, would have considered the legal context to Glyde's forgery. Collins, it seems, wanted to calibrate – through forgery law - his law-literate readers' sympathies towards Glyde's death.

Fictions in law/fictions in the novel: how forgery frames the questions they raise

While Victorian fiction drew on law, Victorian law had fictions of its own. Marjorie Stone quotes a useful definition, from John Ogilvie's *Imperial Dictionary* (1854), of a fiction in law:

[it] is an assumption of a thing made for the purposes of justice, though the same thing could not be proved and may be literally untrue. Thus an heir is held to be the same person with the ancestor, to the effect of making the heir liable for the debts of the ancestor. (127 n.)

Stone's brief tracking of literary responses to Jeremy Bentham's repeated attacks on such legal fictions is suggestive. She first explains Bentham's objections. Not only did legal fictions enable judges to change law without due transparency, but their esoteric

nature alienated non-lawyers from knowledge of the law. More practically, they allowed lawyers to spin out cases unduly for profit. In response to Benthamite criticisms, successive law reform commissions investigated legal fictions (125-32).

From the 1830s to the 1850s, legal fictions became a matter of public debate. They were widely distrusted (Stone 133-36). Dickens in particular, Stone argues, explored how the legal conceptualisation of “fiction” spilled over into other aspects of Victorian life. In her view, from specifically criticising legal fictions in *Pickwick*, Dickens came to expose, for instance, the “‘miserably ragged old fiction’ of [the Dorrits’] gentility.” (149). For Victorian readers as well as for Dickens, she concludes, the idea of a “fiction” – in the sense of the “imprisoning delusions” that genteel Victorian society encouraged its members to construct – was associated with the fictions of the law (150-51).

Although a novel’s fictions could assail the fictions of the law (and the wider fictions that they nurtured), how sound were the ethics of the novel form itself? Stone quotes Janice Carlisle’s argument that in *Little Dorrit*, “‘Dickens embodies one of [Carlyle’s] concerns, the questionable moral status of fiction, its cousinship with lying, within the form of the novel’” (152). She unpicks Carlisle’s connections, saying that Dickens is, on the contrary, distinguishing his fictions from those of the law. Stone infers a general conclusion about Victorian fiction: whereas “the novelist’s” fictions are essentially “narrative” (a story), the law’s fictions are “pretence” (a deception) (152). For Stone, the novel’s fictions are more honest.

Sustaining Stone’s dichotomy is difficult, however. In *Adam Bede*, for instance, George Eliot had carefully claimed for her realism the “precious quality of truthfulness” (177). But Lilian R. Furst, among others, has argued that realism “leads – misleads – readers into the belief that it is an innocent mode” (104). Rather than

admitting that it is a fiction, realism pretends to be true. In their knowing use of “pretence,” legal fictions and realist novels are both transparently fraudulent. Just as lawyers (and non-lawyers) expect legal fictions to convey a legal truth, so Eliot’s readers may assume that her fictions express a truth about human nature or society. Both Victorian legal fictions and Victorian literary fictions, therefore, operated through comparably ambiguous and contentious relationships of truth, lies and fraudulence.

Though the fictions of both the law and the novel were ethically dubious in character, one could nevertheless regard them as related agents of cultural progress. Henry Sumner Maine’s anthropological analysis of legal fictions in *Ancient Law* (1861) identifies the primal human impulse underlying the development of both law and the novel:

It is not difficult to understand why fictions in all their forms are particularly congenial to the infancy of society. They satisfy the desire for improvement, which is not quite wanting, at the same time that they do not offend the superstitious disrelish for change which is always present. At a particular stage of social progress they are invaluable expedients for overcoming the rigidity of law, and, indeed, without one of them, the Fiction of Adoption which permits the family tie to be artificially created, it is difficult to understand how society would ever have escaped from its swaddling clothes, and taken its first steps towards civilisation. We must, therefore, not suffer ourselves to be affected by the ridicule which Bentham pours on legal fictions wherever he meets them. To revile them as merely fraudulent is to betray ignorance of their peculiar office in the historical development of law. (16)

In Maine’s opinion, legal fictions permit a change in society that many feel is needed, while simultaneously minimizing society’s innate resistance to that change. Could Victorian fiction have played a similar cultural role? Christine L. Krueger has argued that literary representations of infanticide had an impact on judicial trials for infanticide.⁴⁷ Judges and juries, she suggests, softened their opinions of real-life women who killed their infants in consequence of sympathising with such “narrative”

fictions as Hetty Sorrel. Although Krueger overstates her case, she nevertheless suggests how the novel could be positioned as an “invaluable expedien[t] for overcoming the rigidity of law” (Maine 16). In this Whiggish sense, the novel’s fictions perhaps functioned rather like Maine’s legal fictions. In a manner anticipatory and quite possibly “fraudulent,” legal and literary fictions, it might appear, created a more civilised Victorian society. One could thus maintain that their aims, if not their means, were ethical.

What I have principally been arguing for in the last few paragraphs, however, is that the word “forgery” frames questions about the ethical and epistemological issues that Victorian fiction and law had in common. The word connects and focuses an entire spectrum of positive and negative ideas about truth, lies and writing: inventing, creating, making, fashioning, crafting, fabricating, pretending, deceiving, lying, imitating fraudulently, falsifying, counterfeiting, and passing off the spurious as the genuine. Victorian law and fiction move, in a number of different ways, in and out of many of these concepts. In so doing, they suggest possible relationships between themselves. Are Victorian novels a form of lying, as Carlyle and Carlisle suggest? If so, what must we make of Krueger’s assertion that Victorian novels could be incorporated into the law’s systems of knowledge and truth? Might these instances be evidence of the novel’s tremendous power - within a context of law - to deceive? When Victorian novels directly addressed the *crime* of forgery, I suggest, they brought such issues closer to the surface of their texts.⁴⁸

Real-life forgery and the limits of law and fiction: the Tracy Peerage case

Could a representation of forgery in a novel initiate or influence legal arguments about forgery? Could one even *inspire* a real-life forgery? There is certainly evidence that Victorians were fascinated by the question of fictional forgery's agency. William C. Townsend, QC and recorder for Macclesfield, wrote, in *Modern State Trials* (1850), of how the House of Lords had lately been "profaned with an audacious forgery" (1: 406). He continued:

One of the claims to the Tracy peerage was sought to be established by the production of a spurious tombstone. Acting on the ingenious hint afforded by the accomplished author of *Ten Thousand A-Year*, in fabricating a false monument, the clever pretender manufactured a mural tablet, with all the signs of antiquity and age, and convenient dates. (1: 406-07)

This "clever pretender" was one Mathew J. Tracy, who had tried – and failed - to claim the titles and estates of Viscount and Baron Tracy of Rathcoole in Ireland in 1839, 1842, 1843 and 1849.⁴⁹ The tombstone was necessary in order to prove that a William Tracy, supposedly buried in Ireland, was the son of an English judge. If this were proven to be so by the inscription on a tombstone, and corroborated by other evidence, Mathew J. Tracy could legitimately claim the Tracy peerage. Townsend, an eminent Victorian legal voice, clearly believed that Tracy had been inspired to commit forgery by a novel's representation of forgery. But the truth of the matter is rather more complicated.

Picaresque, Pickwickian and tremendously popular, *Ten Thousand A-Year* (1839-41) was written by Samuel Warren (1807-1877), lawyer and novelist. The novel repeatedly explains to the "unlearned reader" (317) points of law, legal procedure, legal fictions, and the nomenclature of the law, often at great length.⁵⁰ The reader is even referred to the section on forgery statutes and cases in "Burns's Justice"

(324). Warren's twin careers began in the late 1820s. He began writing *Passages from the Diary of a Late Physician* (a serial in *Blackwood's*) in 1829, the year after he entered the Inner Temple, where he practised as a special pleader from 1831 to 1837, in which year he was called to the bar. He published several manuals, books, and articles on law, became a QC in 1851, and then recorder for Hull in 1852.⁵¹ The following year he was made an honorary D.C.L. of Oxford. Appointed Master of Lunacy in 1859, he subsequently became an important influence on lunacy legislation (*DNB*). He wrote no fiction of note beyond the late 1840s. With *Ten Thousand-A-Year*, however, Warren had firmly established in the mind of the early Victorian readership the connection between law, fiction and forgery.

The forgery plot of *Ten Thousand A-Year* turns on a fraudulent inheritance claim. Tittlebat Titmouse, a poor and foolish London linen-draper's assistant, is manoeuvred by an unscrupulous firm of solicitors, Quirk, Gammon and Snap, into bringing an action of ejectment against the squire of a Yorkshire estate, one Charles Aubrey.⁵² By bringing this action, Tittlebat hopes to gain the title to this estate, which attracts in revenue at least the sum from which the novel takes its name. The lawyers, of course, expect a tidy piece of this income. Tittlebat's claim is only valid, however, if it can be proved that a Henry Dreddlington (father of one Harry) had died prior to 7 August 1742. In a manner half-humorous, half-menacing, but entirely sincere, Gammon suggests to his colleague Quirk that he have forged "an old tombstone – a sort of fragment of a tombstone, perhaps – so deeply sunk in the ground, propably [*sic*], as easily to have escaped observation [...]" (320). The tombstone is duly forged: "an old slanting stone, scarce two feet above the ground, partly covered with moss, and partly hid by rubbish and old damp grass" (336). To Gammon, the tombstone is "just such a looking tombstone as he had long imaged to himself" (335). Forgery in

Ten Thousand A-Year is thus defined as the Gothic materialisation of criminal fancy.

Although Tittlebat wins the initial case, he is later proven to be illegitimate, is imprisoned for debt, and is driven insane.

Had Mathew J. Tracy got, as Townsend claimed, the idea of the forged tombstone from *Ten Thousand A-Year*? Samuel Warren's footnote to the 1845 edition of the novel – written in 1844 - refers directly to the Tracy peerage case as follows:

Not many years ago, the fate of an important case turned upon the existence of a tombstone: and a forged one was produced in court! – The validity of a great Peerage case is at this moment depending upon the fate of the genuineness of one of these dumb and gloomy witnesses.⁵³ (1: 398 n.)

Indeed, a couple of years later, the claim was still pending. In 1847, Tracy asserted that fragments of this celebrated tombstone had been found in several houses in Ireland ("The Tracy Peerage," *The Times* 16 June 1847 and 4 Aug. 1848). These pieces would, Tracy hoped, help him establish his claim. The following year, *The Times* reported that the House of Lords Committee for Privileges was still trying to discover the truth. It was generally thought by the Committee (but not at this point proven) that two men named Holton and M'Ginnis had, under instruction from Tracy or one of his agents, forged a tombstone in 1845. Holton said that:

[H]e had been employed by a man named M'Ginnis to assist him in engraving this identical tombstone; that they were to engrave it in the old style of letters [...]; that afterwards they held the stone over the fire for the purpose of darkening the stone so as to make it look old; that afterwards, with a sledgehammer, they had broken the stone into the pieces which it then appeared in; and that M'Ginnis had told him that the stone was engraved for the purpose of its being sent to London as evidence in a court of law; and that if the party for whom it was done was successful in his suit in consequence they should both make a very good thing of the business.

("The Tracy Peerage," *The Times* 4 Aug. 1848)

This practical account of tombstone forgery strikingly echoes Warren's description of how, prior to arranging the forgery, Quirk had sketched out "pretty little picturesque

devices of a fragmentary character, with antique letters and figures on them – crumbling pieces of stone [...]” (325). It would be remarkable if Tracy had not read about Quirk’s sketches. *Ten Thousand A-Year* was, after all, “one of the most popular novels of the century” (*DNB*).

But the first sentence of Warren’s 1845 footnote perhaps alludes to a real-life tombstone forgery trial that pre-dated his novel. Townsend’s comments about Warren and Tracy occur within the context of the trial in 1839 of Alexander Alexander, who had claimed the titles and estates of the Earl of Stirling.⁵⁴ One of the nineteen pieces of evidence that Alexander had put forward in support of his claim was “an alleged inscription on a tombstone” (Townsend 1: 417). He did not offer the tombstone itself, but instead produced a page on which was, he claimed, a copy of the inscription. This page was supposedly authoritative because it had, he said, been torn from a bible. It was obviously a creative forgery. Narrowly, the Stirling claimant escaped conviction for his false claim to the Stirling peerage (Townsend 1: 419-68). Given Warren’s legal background, it is almost certain that he knew of this case a year or so prior to the publication of *Ten Thousand A-Year*. If Warren had inspired Mathew J. Tracy’s tombstone forgery, then Warren himself had probably utilised the Stirling case for his novel. Tracy could, of course, have formed the idea of forging a tombstone from the Stirling peerage case, *Ten Thousand A-Year*, or both. By the time that Victorian readers came across the forged tombstone motif in *The Woman in White* (1859-60), or in Ellen Wood’s *Elster’s Folly* (1866), they were reading the complex fruits of a subtle legal and literary intercourse.⁵⁵

While Victorian fiction actively embraced the legal discourse of tombstone forgery, the law held Victorian fiction’s representations of forgery at arm’s length. The law’s technical interest in the Tracy peerage case shows just how limited an

impact *Ten Thousand A-Year* actually had on the law. The Tracy Peerage law report (10 Clark & Finnelly 154, 8 ER 700) is concerned exclusively with details from the case on 7 May and 18 June 1839, and 21 March, 2 and 30 May, 9 June 1843. Law reports do not record every case, for their purpose is essentially to record important points of law, to which future cases on similar legal topics may refer. This expressly legal purpose governed how the Tracy peerage story was told. In the law report, the suspicion of forgery relates to another document produced in the case to support Tracy's claim, a prayer book, not to the tombstone. In the period in which the report is concerned, the tombstone was not seen. Seven Irish witnesses testified to its one-time existence, but these were deemed to be of such a uniformly low socio-economic class that Lord Campbell (the Attorney-general) suspected perjury. Lord Brougham also thought it suspicious that, given the tombstone's great importance to the claim, these witnesses had not been brought forward before 1843. (Tracy's father, Joseph, first made the claim in 1835.) This law report – the only one on the Tracy peerage case - is uninterested in the later question of the forged tombstone.⁵⁶ Law considered the forgery apparently inspired by *Ten Thousand A-Year* to be a legal irrelevance.

Two main legal points emerged, eventually, from the Tracy peerage case:

The case of a claimant to a Peerage depending on the genuineness of entries written in an old prayer-book, and dated 1728 and 1729, several witnesses, whose occupations for as long time made them so conversant with manuscripts of different ages, that they could take on themselves to name the period in which any manuscript previous to the year 1700 was written, were all of an opinion that the entries were written in the early part and before the middle of the last century, and at or about the period of their dates. Held, that such evidence is but small testimony, hardly entitled to any weight, especially as the book containing the entries was not satisfactorily identified. A claimant to a Peerage, after his case was referred to the House of Lords, and evidence taken on it, presented an additional case, alleging an inscription on a tombstone in a churchyard in Ireland; which, if proved, would sustain his claim. The tombstone could not be produced. Several witnesses from the neighbourhoods were positive that they saw the tombstone and inscription about 20 years ago. There was no material discrepancy in their statements, nor were any witnesses called to contradict them.

Held, that the evidence was not sufficient of the existence of the tombstone or of the inscription; and that the neglect of the claimant to produce this material part of the case earlier, induced a suspicion of fraud; which could not be removed without the production of the tombstone, or of other witnesses of greater credit from the neighbourhood. (700)

These legal conclusions, moreover, are to be located within a wide-reaching network of related legal points about evidence. This web of relevant legal truth covers various nineteenth-century cases and statutes, both past and future:

[{...}As to scientific evidence generally see notes to *Carter v Boehm*, 1 Sm. L. C. 10th ed., 474; as to evidence of disputed handwriting see 17 and 18 Vict c. 125, as to civil, and 28 and 29 Vict. C. 18, s. 8, as to criminal cases; and *Cresswell v Jackson*, 1860, 2 F. and F. 24; *Cobbet v Kilminster*, 1865, 4 F. and F. 490; and *Reg. V Silverlock* (1894), 2 QB 766; see also, next following case. As to evidence of pedigree see *Davies v Lowndes*, 1843, 6 Man and or. 471.] (700)

While we can say that fictional representations of forgery could stimulate real-life forgery, which, in turn, could become part of legal processes, we must recognise that the novel's influence on legal argument is severely restricted by law's intense – and functionally necessary – preoccupation with its own forensic logic.

Forgery in the newspapers

In the very broad terms of authorship, cultural environment, ideology, narrative structures, representation, ethics, and readership, forgery in Victorian fiction was inextricably linked to real-life lawyers, statutes and courtrooms. Occasionally, fictional forgers owed their existence to their creator's first-hand acquaintance with a real-life forger.⁵⁷ But in the main the Victorian novelist found his or her inspiration for a fictional forger in the newspapers.⁵⁸ Not only did the substance of many newspaper crime reports grow out of legal cases, but also their form. As Kieran

McEvoy explains, law and newspapers “place great emphasis on procedure and precedent [...]” (182). Both are presented to their audience as “‘natural’ or unmediated reality” (ibid.).⁵⁹ On account of these commonalities, newspapers easily edged the law out into a wide public domain.⁶⁰

An analysis of the highest annual number of trial reports for forgery for each decade in *The Times*, from 1837 to 1877, gives some idea of the impressions which habitual *Times* readers like Dickens, Trollope or Thackeray might have formed about forgers and forgery. According to *Palmer’s Index to The Times*, there were thirty-nine trial reports for forgery in 1845, forty-seven in 1857, sixty-one in 1862, and sixty-four in 1868.⁶¹ Almost invariably in these reports, forgery means forging payment orders, receipts, cheques, bills of exchange or promissory notes. There are few will-forgeries. Forgers of all ages, almost always men,⁶² are to be found among engineers, surveyors, policemen, millwrights, maltsters, farmers, bookbinders, printers, shoemakers, servants, dock-workers and shipping agents. Although we read of a solicitor,⁶³ an artillery officer and a company president committing the crime, most real-life forgers in these years were less the gentleman (or lady) criminals so beloved of the fiction of the period, than clerks or skilled tradesmen.⁶⁴ The sums involved could be for as little as two pounds or as much as almost two thousand. Sentences ranged in 1845 from two years’ hard labour in a House of Correction (the then minimum sentence) to transportation for life. After this date, transportation was generally replaced by penal servitude and sentencing seems to have been more flexible, and almost certainly less harsh. Indeed, there are fewer reported instances of a judge reminding the public of “the deeply serious character of the offence of forgery in a commercial country” (“Criminal Trials: Thomas Peat, for Forgery” 21 Aug. 1845). In 1862, twelve years’ penal servitude appears to have been the severest sentence passed. Factors affecting

the length of the sentence included the prisoner's age, his social class, his previous convictions, the nature of his forgery, the manner in which it was committed, and the recommendation of the jury. Acquittals were rare.⁶⁵

Whereas the law was primarily concerned with the legal and socio-economic aspects of the trials, the *Times* reporters themselves often focused on the human interest value: the "very dejected appearances" of the prisoners, the detail that the prisoner was "shabbily-attired" and "wearing a beard and moustache," or the sailor's remark that he was "tipsy" when he forged the cheque ("Criminal Trials" 7 Mar. 1857, 13 Nov. 1857, 14 Apr. 1845). In one report, a clerk for the Buenos Ayres Railway Company, Frank Merridew Goodman, is turned into the protagonist of a hard-luck story. Orphaned at ten, Goodman lived with his grandfather, who speculated and "lost everything," and the poor boy was consequently "thrown upon the world" ("Criminal Trials" 8 Apr. 1868). In one unusual case, "the prisoner had been a gentleman who had moved in high circles of society" ("Criminal Trials" 12 Aug. 1862). Ostensibly on grounds of ill health, but perhaps also in recognition of the prisoner's former gentility, the judge's sentence of twelve months' imprisonment expressly excluded hard labour. Or there is the bizarre story of Noel Desiré Luco, a mariner who forged and uttered warrants for the delivery of two hundred tons of potatoes, and had to defend himself through an interpreter ("Criminal Trials" 15 Dec. 1868). Most touching, however, is the oft-mentioned motive for forgery: to pay off gambling debts.⁶⁶ Like many criminal trials, forgery trials were brief records of the vicissitudes of the lives of Victorian individuals, often full of drama and pathos. They were both real-life stories in themselves and fictional stories in waiting.

There were literally thousands of forgers' stories deposited in newspapers. Between 1837 and 1879, *The Times* published around one thousand five hundred

reports on criminal trials for forgery, and it carried two thousand two hundred additional articles on forgery (including police reports). On average for these years, there were approximately thirty-five trial reports per annum, ranging from sixteen in 1838 to sixty-four in 1868. There are many possible explanations for these prosecutions for forgery, and these might have applied to differing degrees in different years. My chief purpose here, however, is not to elucidate these *Times* statistics as a social historian might do so, but to suggest socio-economic contexts in which contemporary readers might have interpreted them. The spread of literacy increased the number of people who could both commit and detect forgery.⁶⁷ Victorian capitalism's growing mountains of documentation provided evermore opportunities for committing forgery.⁶⁸ The abolition of the death penalty for virtually all kinds of forgery was, by some Victorians, perceived to have lessened the deterrent (Townsend 1: 404, Evans 1). At the same time, the development of the Detective Police in 1844 signalled the authorities' determination to bring those who did commit forgery to justice.⁶⁹ (Since a forger's prosecution was far more likely than in the days of hanging, it is arguable that the deterrent had not, in fact, significantly lessened.⁷⁰) And, as ever, more prosecutions could either mean that there were more forgers, or simply that more forgers were being caught. Specific types of forgery were encouraged by particular circumstances, too.⁷¹ Robb argues that Victorian financial culture – which did not permit failure – sometimes drove businessmen to financial fraud to hide their losses (27). Technical issues must also be considered. David Philips, for example, points to the Bank Charter Act of 1844, which gradually replaced county banks' own banknotes with Bank of England notes. The latter, being uniformly common and circulated nationally, were, Philips suggests, easier to forge than the idiosyncratic and regionally distributed local notes (230-31).⁷²

Although *The Times* reported on almost every forgery trial, few conclusions can be drawn about the variations in the frequency of these crime reports, either. One obvious complication is that a single trial, such as that of the Liberal MP William Roupell, could attract a number of reports over several years.⁷³ Another is that a deferred sentence would necessitate another report. While such difficulties can easily be filtered out, the impact of others is hard to gauge. For a start, the population roughly increased from eighteen million in 1840 to thirty million in 1880 (Hobsbawm, diagram 1), so it is hard to say from these approximate figures for forgery reports whether the crime was, per capita, increasing, stable, or decreasing. According to *The History of Crime in England* (1876), by Lucas Owen Pike, “forgers [had] not increased in proportion to the population” (2: 540). But Pike, a barrister at Lincoln’s Inn, offers no evidence. Certainly, it appears that reports on criminal trials for forgery were not especially common: there were around forty-six thousand criminal trial reports of all kinds in *The Times*, 1837-79.⁷⁴

But there were many journals, of course, reporting on a single forgery trial. A pamphlet compiled by William Henry Barber gives an indication of just how numerous these journals could be. Barber, a solicitor, was convicted of uttering a forged will in 1844. He was sentenced to transportation for life (and served time in Norfolk Island, Australia), but he was pardoned in 1848 and his innocence was officially acknowledged. He was the dupe of one Joshua Fletcher, a man who made money out of discovering – and inventing – heirs to unclaimed stocks and dividends. Fletcher had employed Barber as solicitor for one of his fictitious claimants, who then proved a will at the Doctors’ Commons. When the claimant was exposed as an impostor, Barber, as her solicitor, was indicted for uttering the forged will. In *The Case of Mr. W. H. Barber* (1853), from which these details are summarised, Barber

tabulated and reprinted the newspaper articles on his case. These ran from July 1844 to July 1852 (v-vi, 156-97). Barber listed fifty-eight different titles, featuring a total of eighty-four articles: four law journals (nine articles); five London daily journals (eleven articles); twenty-two London weekly journals (thirty-five articles); and twenty-seven provincial journals (twenty-nine articles). Barber was not, so far as I can ascertain, a major inspiration for a particular fictional forger (though he did write a letter to *The Times* about another forger who was indeed transcribed into Victorian fiction, Thomas Provis [“The Fletcher and Smyth Frauds”]). Yet which author could not have heard of his case during this period?⁷⁵

From newspaper to novel

Newspapers and journals buzzed with references to forgers. So prevalent was forgery in ordinary Victorian life, so prominent were its *causes célèbres*, and so packed with human emotion and experience were the stories of the crime’s perpetrators, that it is small wonder so many Victorian novelists – one immediately thinks of Dickens, Collins and Trollope - chose to transform newspapers’ reports of forgery trials into fiction.⁷⁶ After all, their novels were steeped in the stuff of everyday life. John Coleman remembered how Charles Reade, “[a]rmed with a long pair of scissors, sharp and glittering as a razor [...] would glance over a whole sheet, spot out a salient article or paragraph [...] [and] snip went the scissors, slash went the article as it dropped into the paper basket” (249). Few novelists were as zealous or systematic as Reade in gathering news items that they might use in their novels, but Coleman’s image is an apt symbolic one.

A number of other factors facilitated these crossovers from newspaper to novel. Many novelists – such as Dickens, Collins, Braddon and Ellen Wood – were or had been journalists themselves.⁷⁷ Indeed, Barbara Leckie has shown how the structure and language of newspaper trial reports came to shape fictional narrative.⁷⁸ In the opinion of the *Saturday Review*, moreover, people actually read novels in the 1860s in the same manner as they read newspapers: “Even the best books are, as a rule, ‘bolted’ – [...] The effect [“upon the mind”] is scarcely more durable than that made by one forcible article in a daily newspaper” (“The Uses of Fiction” 323). Reciprocally, Victorian newspapers often operated as though they were novels: they “felt themselves free to speculate, theorize [and] admonish” (Altick, *Studies in Scarlet* 63). In order to connect with the sensibilities of a mass novel-reading public, newspapers also alluded to the novels that had largely shaped them (Altick, *Evil Encounters* 135). Whether in terms of personalities, style, structure or reading practice, journalism and novels overlapped considerably in the Victorian period. Victorian authors knew that their readers’ knowledge of forgery, and their readers’ expectations of forgery’s literary representation, essentially came from newspapers. What novelists were usually doing with forgery trial reports, however, was imaginatively translating, to a greater or lesser degree, and sometimes unconsciously, the evolving fictional qualities of newspapers into those of the novel. Newspapers are therefore best viewed as a suspect and transitional print medium, problematically carrying the real-life forger’s story from law court to novel.⁷⁹

Transcribing real-life crime into fiction: from stigma to sensation

Bulwer-Lytton shrewdly observed that Victorian fiction's use of real-life crime enabled it to offer readers "a sensation of terror that oppresses the more from the conviction that reality lies beneath the fiction" ("A Word" 331). Novel-readers were fascinated by the "reality" of the crime reports of the day.⁸⁰ Why should respectable novelists not engage with this desire and produce a fictional forger supercharged with "reality"? But what was, to Bulwer-Lytton, classical tragedy in a realistic modern form was, to many reviewers, a cheap and irresponsible literary technique. Bulwer-Lytton's *Lucretia; or, The Children of Night* (1846, rev. 1853), which had been largely based on the real-life forger (and poisoner) Thomas Griffiths Wainewright, attracted particular censure not only for encouraging public sympathy for the real-life criminal, but also for lacking artistic merit. In "A Word to the Public" (1847), Bulwer-Lytton defended the moral and creative integrity of his methodology. The newspaper's "business is to deal with facts," he noted, "and it can only partially and briefly convey the deductions which the author of a fiction writes volumes to explain" (315 n.). Fiction, he maintained, could locate modern real-life criminals - such as the forger Thomas Griffiths Wainewright - within a sophisticated and extensive ethical context.

As Bulwer-Lytton's experience suggests, there was more to a real-life forger's appearance in a novel than a particular author's knowledge, interests, and sense of his public. In complex ways, reviewers, editors and publishers also helped to determine the form, quality and frequency of the flow of forgers from newspaper to novel. There are related changes in the circumstances and composition of the novel-reading public to be considered, too.⁸¹ At the beginning of the nineteenth century, the extensive

representation of contemporary real-life crime in a novel connected it to the vulgar broadsheets, ballads and octavo pamphlets featuring stories of executed criminals ' (Altick, *Studies in Scarlet* 17-134).⁸² The Newgate Novel - of which genre *Lucretia* was a leading example - brought the traditional subject matter of street literature to an upmarket audience. The *Spectator* even objected to G. P. R. James's romance, *The Forgery* (1849), on the grounds that "the source of interest is sought in a trite and vulgar theme [i.e. the felony of forgery]." Despite Bulwer-Lytton's attempt to justify the use of real-life crime in the novel on high ethical and aesthetic principles, for much of the 1840s and 1850s, novels featuring forgery were inextricably linked, often in ambiguous ways, to the enormous and shadowy world of proletarian literature.⁸³

To some extent, this was still the case in the 1860s. The *Spectator* remarked that Emma Robinson's *Madeleine Graham* (1864) "is readable only as a chapter out of the 'Newgate Calendar' might be, namely as a very poor and distorted account of real and highly criminal actions [...]" (216). Forgery in more respectable middle-class novels also betrayed its historical origins in the *Newgate Calendar*, even when it appeared at its most contemporary. In 1856, John Sadleir was the epitome of the mid-Victorian high-finance forger. Among various frauds totalling several hundred thousand pounds, he had forged title deeds to properties and issued fictitious shares in the Swedish Railway.⁸⁴ In using Sadleir for his characterisation of Mr. Merdle in *Little Dorrit*, Dickens had chosen a modern big-time forger. The law could not have hanged Sadleir for his forgeries, but he committed suicide to evade justice and the shame of public exposure. Merdle followed suit. In Collins's *The Woman in White* (1859-60), we again see the persistence of a gallows sensibility in the literary treatment of forgery.⁸⁵ On discovering Glyde's forgery, Hartright urges his readers to recall the fact that, "in past years, [Glyde's crime might] have hanged him" (521).⁸⁶

Later, Glyde dies by fire.⁸⁷ Forgery still – almost naturally, it might have appeared to Dickens, Collins and their readership – entailed a theatrical execution.⁸⁸ For the mid-Victorians, forgery readily carried the excitement of secrecy and extreme risk, and the *frisson* of death.⁸⁹ In spirit, forgery was still a pre-Victorian crime.

While Dickens and Collins alluded to fictional forgery's Newgate antecedents, they were also instrumental in raising – up to a point – its literary profile and status. Wynne has shown how *The Woman in White* was made far more respectable by being serialised, alongside educative non-fictional articles, in Dickens's weekly family magazine (38-59). To the predominantly middle-class readers of *All The Year Round*, Collins offered forgery-fuelled excitement of a kind that working-class readers found in penny dreadfuls and shilling shockers.⁹⁰ Indeed, many of Collins's middle-class readers had emerged from that working-class readership base (Wynne 34). In the early and mid-1850s, forgery had mainly been a financial crime primarily used to instruct or panic the middle-class reader (as in *Ruth* and *Little Dorrit*). After *The Woman in White*, however, fictional forgery could become a powerful mechanism of suspense, a signifier of all manner of transgressions, and a strong generic determiner. By the early 1860s, even Trollope and Thackeray, who were judged by contemporaries to be poles apart from Collins, were exploring the artistic possibilities of representing forgery in their fiction.⁹¹ With Collins, and under the patronage of Dickens, forgery became repackaged as a sensational crime.⁹² Bulwer-Lytton is perhaps the great progenitor (echoes of *Lucretia* may be heard in *The Woman in White*'s conjunction of Glyde's forgery with Fosco's knowledge of poisons). But the huge success of Collins's novel made forgery an all-but-essential plot component for the ambitious and canny novelist. The moment was ripe.

My own very modest sample of novels featuring forgery gives some impression of the crop to be harvested very soon after the publication of *The Woman in White*.⁹³ There were at least sixteen novels featuring forgery published - in book form - between 1850 and 1858 (including Collins's *Basil* [1852], Gaskell's *Ruth* [1853] and the revised version of Bulwer-Lytton's *Lucretia* [1853]). The figure for 1860 to 1868 is more than double that number. The peak year, it seems, was 1864, with a minimum of thirteen novels.⁹⁴ While the names of Mary Elizabeth Braddon, Ellen Wood and Sheridan Le Fanu mark this as another year of sensationalism,⁹⁵ those obscure novelists who were not obviously associated with sensation fiction, such as John Bradford or Thomas Miller, quite clearly felt obliged to spice up their plots with forgery.⁹⁶ Even allowing for such distorting factors as the variation in the total number of books published each year,⁹⁷ and the omissions and errors in my estimates (which are in any case extremely conservative), forgery's high incidence of representation in the novels of the sixties, compared with previous years, is difficult to deny.⁹⁸ Forgery's sensational qualities continued to be exploited by fiction well into the late 1870s.

This generic pressure had been built up by specific cultural conditions.⁹⁹ Fundamentally, the popular taste for sensation fiction is attributable to the enormous increase in newspaper publishing and reading in the 1860s. The push for mass education, which led to the 1870 Education Act, brought greater literacy. With the repeal of the Newspaper Tax in 1855, and of the Paper Tax in 1861, the cost of a newspaper was significantly reduced. At around the same time, telegraphy, technological advances in newspaper printing, and better rail and postal services, all enabled the wide and rapid spread of daily newspapers. To attract and retain readers, these dailies sought sensational crimes, especially murder. They reported them – and

the lengthy trials that usually ensued – in a sensational style. The newspapers were thus the inheritors of the broadsheet tradition of the early part of the century. But whereas the former publications had reported public spectacle to a limited audience, the latter revealed private secrets to a massive one. This new and predominantly lower-middle class readership wanted to read newspaper-like fiction. They thirsted for novels about the hidden crimes that were - reportedly - happening in their suburban habitat. In terms of content, style and even format, these readers expected novels more in keeping with the speed and jolting rhythms that they felt characterised their experiences of modernity.

Real-life forgers had, of course, always been waiting in the newspapers, ready to enter the novel. A clergyman forger - the Rev. Dr. William Bailey – unobtrusively found his way into G. P. R. James's *The Forgery* (1849) and Gaskell's *Ruth* (1853). The forger Thomas Powell came to appear, more recognisably than Bailey did in *The Forgery* and *Ruth*, in Dickens's *David Copperfield* (1849-50). And there is, of course, the matter of Sadleir and Merdle. By the 1860s, though, there were more forgers (in total), more newspapers, more reports of forgers, and more people reading about forgers than ever before. In a related movement, mainstream fiction entered a markedly journalistic mode and sought a far more socially inclusive audience. Together, these developments facilitated the frequent transcription of newspapers' stories of forgers into fiction. *Wylder's Hand* (1864) alluded not only to the ubiquitous Sadleir, but also to William Roupell, a Liberal MP and socialite who was exposed as a will-forgery in 1862. Victorian readers would have also recognised Roupell's story in Richard Harris's *Mayfair to Millbank* (1870). In similar fashion, the Tichborne Claimant's sensational imposture, and his related forgeries, stimulated

several “Claimant” novels of the 1860s and 1870s. Never before was there an easier time for the novel to utilise real-life forgers.¹⁰⁰

The old objections to these literary practices still stood in certain quarters. Essentially commercial products for popular entertainment, sensation novels – of all kinds - usually met with disapproval from the highbrow journals.¹⁰¹ H. L. Mansel’s lambasting of the newspaper novel in “Sensation Novels” (Apr. 1863) parallels, in many respects, the criticisms that Bulwer-Lytton faced in 1846 for utilising the stories of real-life criminals.¹⁰² But the tide of sensationalism was strong, and great novelists who utilised real-life forgers needed no defence. Dickens’s *Great Expectations* (1861) and Trollope’s *Orley Farm* (1862) drew, respectively, on the forgery cases of Thomas Provis (1853-54) and Lady Ricketts (1842). Largely unknown now, these cases would have been remembered by many contemporary readers.¹⁰³ Thackeray dredged up Thomas Powell’s forgeries for *The Adventures of Philip* (1862). For Melmotte in *The Way We Live Now* (1875), Trollope took several details from the case of the long-dead Sadleir. The sensation novel’s impact on the literary climate facilitated, and perhaps encouraged, Victorian fiction’s returns to real-life forgeries past.

Sourcing literary representations of real-life forgery: how and why

Tracking these routes between real-life forgers in newspapers and fictional forgers is, as the Tracy peerage episode illustrates, a tentative business.¹⁰⁴ Is a novel’s forger fashioned from a recent report of a real-life forgery case, a much earlier one, or an amalgam of two or more cases, perhaps separated by many years? Or is he (or she) descended from a *fictional* forger (or several of them) that, in turn, owes his (or her) existence to a real-life original (or more than one)? Or is he (or she) derived from a

barely separable combination of these two lines of influence? And do some of the narrative clues that might suggest such lines of inquiry actually refer to sources unconnected with forgery? Could the novel's apparently substantial reference to a well-known forgery case, for example, actually turn out to be a minor shoot onto which the author has grafted, perhaps unconsciously, say, autobiographical details that he (or she) has in common with a celebrated forger?¹⁰⁵

A map of real-life and fictional forgery, however sketchy and provisional, begins to tell us something of the nature of fictional forgery, and of the law- and newspaper-created world with which it tried to connect. Fictional forgers almost always reflect on real-life forgers. Not only is Sadleir's evasive evil depicted in *Merdle*, for example, but also the extent to which Sadleir was the creation and embodiment of, and retribution occasioned by, Victorian greed. In ways such as this, Victorian novelists helped to shape the Victorian cultural construction of felonious forgery.

But my interest in such a map lies primarily in the obverse perspective. Into which artistic directions was a novelist taken by real-life forgery? What did novelists gain by representing forgery? One preliminary and general point is obvious. Real-life forgers unwittingly furthered fiction's case. Newspaper reports of forgeries in *The Times* (or the *Daily Telegraph*) instilled in middle-class minds the idea that fictions could indeed be pushed into reality. Inadvertently, they theoretically underpinned – as no other type of crime report did – Victorian fiction's commonly expressed claim, one endorsed by several major voices in modern criticism, that it could change society.¹⁰⁶ In bringing real-life forgers from newspapers into their plots, authors anchored their novels to solid occasions on which fiction (say, a forged will) had been judged by the law to have the power to alter reality (to create, for example, estates and a title for a

pauper). Forgeries are potent mixtures of make-believe that inhabit the forms of reality. Forgeries could, if they remained undetected or unexposed, radically change real-life forgers' lives forever. In summoning from a newspaper the presence of a real-life forger into a novel, Victorian fiction signalled its desire for some of the real-life effects of this magical power.

1.3 Literary Inspiration: the Legacy of Romanticism

Although the Victorian period was evidently teeming with both real-life forgers and fictional forgers, there has been relatively little critical interest in how the former might have influenced the latter. Forgery studies at present are concerned with trans-historical postmodernist theories of the text, the eighteenth century, and Romanticism.¹⁰⁷ Literary forgery dominates. K. K. Ruthven's conclusion to his recent and wide-ranging study accidentally explains why: "[a]s the repressed text of literary studies, literary forgery constitutes an indispensable critique of those cultural practices that foster the so-called genuine article [...]" (171). Literary forgery most obviously developed literary theory and practice in the late eighteenth-century and the Romantic period. And, in its postmodernist playfulness, literary forgery continues to pose fundamental questions about the nature of literature. This is why critical studies in forgery and literature have focused sharply on literary forgery.¹⁰⁸ But why has felonious forgery's significance to the Victorian novel been so undervalued? Has it even been properly understood? Which theoretical lens will enable us to see it?

From Romantic poetry to the Victorian novel, from literary forgery to felonious forgery

Paradoxically, literary forgery is the place to start if we are to understand the nature of how real-life felonious forgery influenced – inspired, even – Victorian fiction. *The Forger's Shadow* (2002), by Nick Groom, explicates the Romantic base on which Victorian fiction built its own distinctive relationship with forgery. In Groom's account, literary forgery's intrinsic fraudulence had enabled Romantic poetry to conceive of its own defining qualities as authenticity and originality.¹⁰⁹ And yet, he continues, Thomas Chatterton's fake manuscripts of a fictitious fifteenth-century monk, Thomas Rowley, were just as creative and original. For Groom, literary forgeries threatened to expose the spuriousness of Romanticism's cult of the unique creativity of the divinely inspired poetic mind. The Romantic poets' solution, he argues, was to assimilate literary forgers as inspirational "daemons" or spiritual mediators of the Romantic poetic genius.

In Groom's account of literature and forgery, "the otherworldly and inspirational quality of the forger shifts decisively in the nineteenth century to a predominantly legal issue of fraud [...]" (258). By the Victorian period, he emphasizes, forgery had lost its privileged position as a negotiator of literary form and had been relegated to a subject of representation, a mere image of criminality. Whereas "Keats recognized in Chatterton a profound poet of nature, using a language apparently uncorrupted by modernity [...]" (172), and subsequently absorbed Chatterton, myth and poet, into his own poetics, Thomas Griffiths Wainewright simply "snakes through the work of Dickens as a theatrical baddie, as a shorthand for wickedness" (257).

Studies of Victorian fiction's relation to real-life forgery have indeed, in the main, been uninterested in discussing real-life forgers as the "daemons" of Victorian fiction. Real-life forgers have been valued chiefly as the flesh and blood antecedents of fictional forgers. Andrew Motion, for example, has shown us the Thomas Griffiths Wainewright in Bulwer-Lytton's *Lucretia* (283-86); Norman Russell, the John Sadleir in Dickens's *Little Dorrit* (131-48).¹¹⁰ Alternatively, real-life forgers have been placed alongside tangentially connected fictional forgers and then subsumed – as competing representations – in the wider discourse of Victorian criminality. Wynne, as we have seen, places Glyde's forgery within the context of *All The Year Round*'s articles on real-life financial crime (50-54). In the light of these and other studies of Victorian fiction's relation to real-life forgery, Groom's judgement seems reasonable.

But Groom's focus on literary forgery leads him to glide over a point that I regard as crucial for my own study. Chatterton was both a *literary* forger and a poet. These obvious facts made his value to literature's identity and direction relatively easy for Blake and Keats both to recognize and to absorb consciously into their own poetry and poetics. It is perhaps unsurprising that "Romantic poets forged their theories of the imagination around Chatterton" (210). Victorian novelists' typical conceptualisation of forgers as *felons*, by contrast, did not naturally lead them to take a theoretical decision to transform real-life forgers primarily into a medium for negotiating literary form.¹¹¹

But mid-Victorian novelists' prosaic sensibilities did not, as far as the novel was concerned, consequently lead to the evaporation of forgery's "inspirational quality." Rather, the author generally ceased to be the focalising consciousness for matters of forgery, inspiration and form. The Victorian novel itself assumed this role. In Peter Brooks's definition, a literary text is "a system of internal energies and

tensions, compulsions, resistances, and desires” (xiv).¹¹² It possesses psychic and linguistic dynamics independent of its author. Novels have minds of their own.

The Victorian novel, I propose, sometimes introjected into its narrative and figurative structures, from several cases of real-life felonious forgery, many of the critiquing, questioning and inspirational functions that Romantic poets, overtly and knowingly, had drawn out of real-life literary forgers. I am not, of course, suggesting that this process began with Victorian fiction,¹¹³ or that it was confined to Victorian fiction exclusively. And I am not advocating a poststructuralist annihilation of the Victorian author. (I favour the humanist assumption that, on one level, a Victorian novel’s depiction of forgery usually springs from its author’s familiarity with a particular forgery trial.) Victorian novels took realistic details from real-life forgery cases. Once introduced into the dynamics of the text, these details, more often than not and usually unbeknownst to the author, focused a specific textual anxiety. They provided the structure – the language – for a number of Victorian novels to unburden their concerns of form. Through their portrayals of forgery – in characterisation, plotting and imagery – such novels defined, communicated, and sometimes seemed triumphantly to dispel, their foremost anxieties of representation, style, or epistemology. The exact nature of these novels’ anxiety varies considerably, from a novel’s relations with its reader, to its handling of narrative devices (the representation of time, for example), to its doubts about the validity of a specific literary style (sensationalism, the Gothic, or a specific conception of realism), to its epistemological legitimacy relative to other discourses (particularly the law). Victorian novels could, I maintain, express their self-doubt (or otherwise) through representations of forgery generated by real-life forgery.

By the Victorian period, forgery's relation to literature had somehow – for complex reasons relating to poetry's fall as the dominant genre, and prose fiction's meteoric rise, one assumes - taken on a character more recognisably criminal and less manifestly creative. It became defined less by authors committing acts of literary forgery (that had affinities with criminal forgery), than by literature's internalisation and *self*-application of the felonious forgery paradigm. Forgery became more autonomous within literature, at home with texts, rather than authors. In consequence, its influence became more subtle, more difficult to see at work. (In stark contrast, literary forgers had affected literature by definition.)

In one sense, Victorian fiction's self-reflexive relation to felonious forgery is not particularly remarkable. Victorian fiction used notions of criminal forgery rather as other elements of Victorian culture sometimes did. An article in *Punch* on Parisian women's hair fashions in 1870 offers a curious parallel. Informed that, "[g]olden hair is still in great request, and dyes are largely used in order to procure the fashionable colour," *Punch* commented: "what is changing black or grey to gold but a fashionable forgery, which should be treated as a capital offence? [The lady who dyes her hair so] is an offender against the laws of Nature, if she takes to forgery, and tries to wear false gold in it" ("Fashionable Forgery"). Although women's hair fashions and the form of Victorian fiction are, of course, in very few respects comparable, considered together, they illustrate just how easily forgery was enlisted into Victorian culture as a metaphor for idiosyncratic notions of falseness in form. Furthermore, *Punch*'s playful punning – "capital" as both "head" and "punishable by death," for instance - illustrates the linguistic versatility occasioned by forgery. Victorian fiction too was often remarkably ingenious in the ways in which it worked felonious forgery into its patterns of language.

But why, one might ask, did Victorian novels worry about themselves – or else make a point of not worrying about themselves – through their representations of criminal forgery? Arguably, such a striking cultural emblem of forbidden textual imitation inevitably operates self-reflexively within a literary text. But the answer perhaps also lies in the way that Victorian fiction habitually professed to engage with political and socio-economic realities. *Ruth* spoke up for unmarried mothers. *Little Dorrit* criticised government administration. *Orley Farm* disputed the law's suitability for dealing with certain individuals humanely. Victorian fiction's representations, whether implicitly or explicitly, placed themselves in competition with those of other discourses (and were often criticised by contemporaries for doing so). Ultimately, Victorian fiction sought public recognition as a source of knowledge equal to law. In trying to build an epistemological bridge between itself and law-based cultural discourses (such as politics), Victorian fiction admitted the possibility of two-way traffic. It was part of the Victorian novel's design that socio-legal conceptions of forgery could – in theory – travel to the heart of the Victorian novel's sense of itself as an aesthetic entity. For some Victorian novels, they did indeed do so.

Oscar Wilde's understanding of forgery's relation to aesthetics illuminates brilliantly the tension between the Victorian novel's socio-political ambitions and the uncertain epistemological status of its form. First, Wilde turns forgery into a purely aesthetic issue for art. In "Pen, Pencil, and Poison" (1889), Wilde cleverly juxtaposes the facts that Wainewright was an artist, an art critic and a forger. Viewed through Wilde's dictum that "Life itself is an art" (65), Wainewright's forgeries become nothing more or less than exciting fictional personae. Wilde decriminalises forgery for art. Second, in "The Decay of Lying" (1889), Vivian proclaims, "Art never expresses anything but itself" (43). His position suggests that the Victorian novel's

representations of forgery could *only* be self-referential. According to Wildean literary theory, therefore, Glyde says less about the financial forgeries of City forgers – Wynne’s central point - than about the preoccupations of *The Woman in White* qua novel. To claim more, perhaps, was to forge a discourse – to create and to defraud. While Wilde would surely have approved of such forging, the Victorian novel, of whichever variety, assumed that it at least had some sort of working relationship with the world it represented. What Wilde said and intimated about art at the close of the eighties, I suggest, elements of Victorian fiction had already sensed deep within their own textual fibres.

I wish to make one distinction absolutely clear, however. Although I am interested in Victorian fiction’s epistemological relation to the representations of forgery in law-based discourses, I do not consider whether Victorian fiction could or could not, in any meaningful sense, connect with the world it represented. (The Tracy peerage episode suggests that it did, probably.) Rather, I am concerned – in several parts of the thesis - with how particular Victorian novels negotiated, through their representations of forgery, the sort of epistemology of the novel suggested by Wilde: their doubts *per se*, rather than how justified these were.

John Vernon (194-207), J. Hillis Miller (94-95) and Patrick Brantlinger (121-41) have all already recognised a connection between forgery and the form of the Victorian novel, noting that Victorian realism can be understood as the circulation of a counterfeit reality. But their observations are, by design, cursory, over-homogenized, and based on few texts. Their conceptualisation of forgery is insufficiently grounded in contemporary references to forgery. Nor do they allow for the importance of the real-life forgery cases that shaped the Victorian novel’s portrayals of forgery. In my judgement, the Victorian novel’s relation to criminal

forgery can only be explored in terms of the creative interplay between legal discourse and literary form.

Case studies

Real-life forgery cases took the Victorian novel in precise directions and produced distinct textual effects. I have selected my cases chiefly for their impact on the Victorian novel during its most flourishing period, roughly from the mid-1840s to the late 1870s.¹¹⁴ Some forgery cases have already been critically established as literary influences. Where appropriate, I have tried to extend the range of these cases' literary influence beyond that which has been conventionally recognised. With several other cases, I have tried to uncover particular novels' debts of influence (or, at the very least, to show how the correspondences between a case and a novel might be more than mere coincidence). My interest in authors' biographies is limited mainly to that end.

The novels, all of which portray forgery, have been chosen on one or more of the following criteria: the novel was written by a major Victorian author; it was judged by elements of the Victorian periodical press to be representative of contemporary trends in Victorian fiction; it illustrates, or provides a necessary qualification of, a general pattern. Minor Victorian fiction can often articulate more forcefully a position also held by major fiction, and can give an argument breadth. For these reasons, as well as my desire to acknowledge the variety of fiction on offer to Victorians, I have made extensive use of it.

But my sample is less dependent on minor fiction than perhaps it might appear. Of the seventeen novels that I study in detail, six are core Victorian novels

(*David Copperfield*, *Little Dorrit*, *Great Expectations*, *Orley Farm*, *The Way We Live Now* and *The Woman in White*); three are second-division novels by major Victorian novelists (*The Adventures of Philip*, *Is He Popenjoy?* and *Ruth*); three have been deemed important enough to be republished in modern editions (*The Forger's Wife*, *Lucretia* and *Wylder's Hand*); Victorian readers would have recognised the authors of another three - *The Forgery*, *The Wandering Heir* and *Within the Maze* – as highly successful and celebrated novelists (and, while Reade – seen by contemporaries as the heir to Dickens – no longer enjoys his Victorian position as a major novelist, Ellen Wood's reputation is now regaining ground); only *Madeleine Graham* and *Mayfair to Millbank* are relatively obscure (though their authors were fairly well known to Victorians). This is, I believe, a fair sample, balancing, as far as possible, the claims of past and present literary evaluations, and my own sense of duty (as a literary critic) to both the centre and the margins of literature.

Throughout the thesis, my method is to bring non-literary texts and Victorian novels into a conversation that the novels themselves initiated. Naturally, these conversations vary in topic, form and length. To various degrees of intimacy, a novel might engage with personal letters about a forger, a trial transcript, or even material published by the forger himself. In some cases, I suggest that a particular non-literary text is a literary inspiration that would probably have been known to the author. In others, my use of non-literary material – a law or newspaper report, for example – is primarily intended to define a novel's representation of a real-life forger against a complementary or competing narrative voice. In my investigations of such connections, my guiding questions have been literary rather than legal or historical.¹¹⁵ Which conceptualisation of the forger did each novel take from a particular case? What did this forgery case elucidate to a novel about the legitimacy of its own

strategies of representation? How might a novel's response to this knowledge have been defined in its textual patterns? And how did this knowledge affect the novel's sense of its own place within the genre? Above all, what did this forgery case contribute to the development of the form of Victorian fiction?

The thesis

Real-life forgery, I propose, helped Victorian fiction to move, by advances and reverses, from displaying anxiety about aspects of its form in 1846 to an apparent position of relative textual confidence by 1879.¹¹⁶ This movement might signify, however, less Victorian fiction's gradual release from its various anxieties than its increasingly successful repression of them. This development is, of course, also attributable to changes in the material and cultural climate in which novels were produced and consumed during this period. My study discusses these changes in so far as a text's representation of forgery itself appears, to me, to do so. In short, I am trying to establish the importance of real-life forgery's role in moulding Victorian fiction's form.

1.4 Summary

This introductory chapter has, I believe, laid the groundwork for my argument in three basic ways. First, I have sketched the socio-historical and literary contexts. Forgery was variously framed by Victorian culture as a legal issue, a derailment in a financial system, a problem of inheritance, or a theft of identity. Forgery was represented

substantially and extensively in the Victorian novel, 1846-79. The frequency of fictional representations of forgery was considerably accelerated by the emergence of the sensation novel (especially *The Woman in White*). Though typically sensational in character by the 1860s, all these representations were fundamentally socio-economic. They played upon the materialist insecurities of Victorian readerships. They originated in the statutes and case law of forgery. As legal discourse, forgery entered Victorian fiction problematically, mainly through the powerful cultures of law operating within Victorian literary milieus. Some of these mechanisms were practical (like the shaping of Victorian fiction by newspaper crime reports); others were more philosophical (ethical legislation, in particular, was attempted by both law and literature).

Second, I have outlined the central theoretical proposition for my thesis. Constituted essentially by the cultural practices of writing and imitation, Victorian fiction was peculiarly responsive to the criminality of forgery. To various degrees of authorial knowledge, several real-life forgers became worked into the plots and imagery of a number of Victorian novels, both major and minor. By inspiring these novels to conceptualise forgery self-reflexively and in specific ways, real-life forgers influenced these novels' artistic development.

Third, I have briefly identified the major methodological issue in connecting the socio-historical aspects of my study to the theoretical: whether non-literary material functions as a source or context. Above all, I have staked a fresh claim for the critical significance of Victorian fiction's relations with the real-life felonious forgers of the nineteenth century.

Notes

¹ See Sanders, *English Literature* 399-457.

² Copyright law is the only common area. Charles Reade opined, "The same people that steal a foreign author's property mutilate it, and *forged his name* to what he never wrote: and they cannot be hindered, except by international copyright" (*Readiana* 200). Reade is eager to attribute the stigma of forgery to American literary piracy, but this was not technically forgery. The first English copyright law was passed in 1709, essentially prohibiting the publication of an author's work without his permission. The United States copyright laws did not satisfactorily protect English authors until 1909 (Roberts 122).

³ As I demonstrate throughout the thesis, different novels define this legitimacy in different ways.

⁴ See Gilbert 58-65. I discuss her theorising of genre in detail in chapter three.

⁵ The question of readership is, of course, complicated. To give but two well-known examples:

Trollope occasionally spoke – in code – specifically to a worldly male audience (see Cohen 159-90); Dickens's serialised novels of the late 1850s and early 1860s attracted a working-class audience, too (Wynne 23-24). Reviewers in the *Athenaeum*, arguably the most comprehensive and long-standing Victorian reviewing platform, reviewed novels published in book form. For a brief and authoritative account of Mudie's enormous impact on novel writing, publishing and reading, see Sutherland, *Victorian Novelists and Publishers* 24-30.

⁶ These plot summaries have been compiled from Sutherland, *Longman Companion*.

⁷ Winifred Hughes sees Glyde's death as divine justice for his treatment of Laura and Anne (*Maniac* 139-40). I think it can also be related more directly to the crime committed there.

⁸ Throughout *The Woman Reader*, Kate Flint suggests that female readers would have been highly sensitised to women-centred themes. On women, property law and inheritance law in Victorian fiction, see Loncar 136-98, T. Dolin, *Mistress of the House*, K. Dolin, *Fiction and the Law* 116-120.

⁹ John Binny reported in 1862 that coining "is carried on in many of the low neighbourhoods" (377). The crime is profiled through Bob Hewett in George Gissing's *The Nether World* (1889): 212-21, 261-65, 334-36. The class of Dickens's coiner in *Great Expectations* (1860-61) is less easy to pinpoint. Called the "Colonel," he appears to be a working-class criminal with gentlemanly pretensions (261-62).

¹⁰ Wilmot does, however, steal the identity of a wealthy banker, a man he has murdered.

¹¹ A notable exception, however, is Uriah Heep in *David Copperfield* (1849-50), the clerk whose forgeries are part of his plans for socio-economic advancement.

¹² See C. Mitchell x-ix.

¹³ Fiction could use its portrayals of forgery to explore the idea of the loss of reputation in quite subtle ways, too. Glyde's forgery, for example, is intended to conceal his father's scandalous failure to marry his mother (542-45). (See Meckier, "Wilkie Collins's *The Woman in White*" 113.)

¹⁴ See Durey, who asserts that, "Oliphant transformed the alleged crime in [Trollope's] *The Last Chronicle of Barset* (1867) into an actual crime to illustrate the social decline of clergyman" (88).

¹⁵ Though their generic origins largely lie in the Gothic tradition of iniquitous monks, clergyman forgers in Victorian novels generally resonate with the religious issues of the day, from Tractarianism (and responses to it) in the 1840s, to the theological implications of German bible scholarship in the 1860s and beyond. Clergyman forgers are drawn from a variety of denominations. While Jesuit priests are the forgers in both Catherine Sinclair's *Cross Purposes* (1855) and James Augustus St. John's *The Ring and the Veil* (1856), the forgers in the Rev. Edward Gomersall Charlesworth's *Ironopolis* (1874) and Oliphant's *Phoebe, Junior* are Anglican. To a society that increasingly felt its faith ebbing away, these novels offered disturbing images of fraudulent Christian ministers. On the discourse of doubt in Victorian fiction generally, see Butler, and Burrow.

¹⁶ W. H. Wills wrote the first chapter; Wills and Dickens together wrote the second. The matter was of some interest in the 1850s. Henry Bradbury (1831-60) published *On the Security and Manufacture of Bank Notes: A Lecture* in 1856, the year in which he began his banknote printing business. His pamphlet essentially argued that, while forgers were getting better, little was being done to guard against the threat that they posed to the paper currency system. Bradbury wrote many works on the subject (Boone), and he was instrumental in making Bank of England notes more difficult to forge (Dodd and Wills 557). The Bank of England even published a pamphlet, *How to Detect Forged Banknotes* (1856): know the genuine note perfectly, the Bank advised, and remember that the paper presents the greatest difficulty for the banknote forger.

¹⁷ See Robb 53-54, who notes that some railway companies, in consequence, established a "Forged Transfer Reserve Fund" to cover losses.

¹⁸ For a detailed account of the forgeries by one of the forgers themselves, see Bidwell.

¹⁹ See Nenadic, who asserts the value of Wilkie Collins's fiction as an index to financial nightmares.

²⁰ On nineteenth-century insolvency, see Lester. On John Dickens in the Marshalsea, see Sanders, *Charles Dickens* 8-10.

²¹ Reed explains how mid-Victorian speculation novels reflected views on railway mania, on the spread of joint-stock companies (made possible by the Companies Act of 1844), on global speculation, and on how these various developments affected the family and society. See also Altick, *Presence* 638-67.

²² On the idealised Victorian family, see Ittmann and Mintz. On the wider sociological context, see O'Day 129-275.

²³ A notable exception is Braddon's *The Doctor's Wife* (1864), in which Isabel Sleaford is the neglected daughter of a forger.

²⁴ See also Taylor, "Representing Illegitimacy," and Henriques.

²⁵ See Sutherland's introduction to *Is He Popenjoy?* ix.

²⁶ Much has been written about Victorian fiction's articulation of, and responses to, these fears. Though Loesberg is not concerned with the impostor *per se*, his account of how anxieties about the dissolution of class identity were expressed in several novels of the period is seminal. Also see Haynie.

²⁷ Of the novels I consider in detail, Trollope's *The Way We Live Now* (1875) is the most extensive literary representation of this process.

²⁸ See Montwieler.

²⁹ I consider these criminals in more detail in chapters two, three and four.

³⁰ Rance, for instance, suggests that the sensation novel enabled Victorian society to confront and expunge many of its fears (106-08).

³¹ On the South Sea Bubble, see Robb 13-14.

³² See McGowen, who details how business interests, judges and legal advisers together established the death penalty for forgery in the eighteenth century.

³³ See Ferguson, who neatly summarises how Britain's finance system enabled its remarkable economic growth (15-17).

³⁴ In the same table, the proportion is roughly the same for forgery cases tried on the Home, Western and Norfolk circuits during these years.

³⁵ Henry Brougham argued that juries were reluctant to convict forgers. Also see Radzinowicz, who records that bankers, in particular, believed that more forgers would be convicted if the crime were not capital (4: 305). More generalised and theoretical explanations might be arrived at through Foucault or Gatrell. In a Foucauldian reading, forgery's removal from the capital list might be attributed to the state's overall fine-tuning of its disciplinary power on the individual. Gatrell, however, would point to

the growing middle class's desire to establish itself as a civilising power, one disgusted by the public spectacle of the death penalty. Although forgery was a specific crime, its removal from the capital list must also be seen as part of the wider issue of capital punishment.

³⁶ This phantasmal quality also applied to the forger himself. As *Household Words* explained in 1850, the forger may be distinguished from other thieves thus: "the forger need have no accomplice; he is burdened with no bulky and suspicious property; he needs no receiver to assist his contrivances. The skill of his own individual right hand can command thousands; often with the certainty of not being detected, and oftener with such rapidity as to enable him to baffle the pursuit of justice" ("Two Chapters on Banknote Forgeries" 558).

³⁷ In *Mayfair to Millbank* (1870), Richard Harris gives a sardonic account of how the system encourages irresponsible young men to borrow money that they cannot repay. In consequence, Harris implies, they might easily turn to forgery (1: 145-71).

³⁸ See K. Dolin 1-44. Though I occasionally cover similar ground, my account focuses sharply on forgery.

³⁹ Sutherland estimates that as many as "one in five male Victorian novelists was a lawyer" (*Victorian Fiction* 162).

⁴⁰ See "Circumlocution" and "The License of Modern Novelists." According to his brother, Leslie Stephen, James Fitzjames Stephen's view was that "A novel should be a serious attempt by a grave observer to draw a faithful portrait of the actual facts of life" (155).

⁴¹ See also Ingram, Fisichelli, and Slakey, "Trollope's Case for the Moral Imperative."

⁴² Novels also attempted to assert their role as cultural yardsticks in areas other than ethics. In the murder trial of Phineas Finn in *Phineas Redux* (1874), Trollope holds up the plot of a novel as the true measure of probability in life, one that should be accepted by the law. Mr. Bouncer, the novelist, gives his evidence, arguing that in a novel, Phineas's actions would not make him a convincing murderer. Trollope implies that if a sequence of actions and time-scale do not ring true of a character in a novel, they do not do so for a man accused in a court of law (2: 230-34).

⁴³ Aristodemou comprehensively theorizes this intimacy. She outlines how law and literature are discursive domains that reflect on the commonalities of, and differences between, each other's values and modes of signification: their epistemologies and teleologies, their techniques of narration, their conceptions of language and its material effects, their interplay of aesthetics and ethics, their relative

cultural legitimacies, their ideological functions, and their strategies for creating human subjectivities (1-28).

⁴⁴ Also see Drinker.

⁴⁵ On Dickens's legal knowledge generally, see Holdsworth.

⁴⁶ See C. F. Robinson, "Trollope's Jury Trials."

⁴⁷ Korobkin's assessment of the adultery trial that inspired Charles Reade's *Griffith Gaunt* (1866) takes a similar position. She concludes that, "Complex acts of literary interpretation were [...] offered to the jury as legitimate components in the judicial process of evidentiary evaluation" (48). A reader's response to a novel, she argues, could be offered as evidence in mid-Victorian courts.

⁴⁸ I return to these questions at various points in the thesis.

⁴⁹ After the exposure of the tombstone forgery, it seems that Tracy went abroad. Tracy's brother, Charles L. Tracy wrote a letter to *The Times* on 17 Feb. 1858, explaining that Mathew J. Tracy should not be confused with a Benjamin Wheatley Tracey. This last-named individual, a lieutenant in the Royal Navy, had begun a claim of his own for the Tracy peerage in 1853. See *The Times* 8 Aug. 1854, and *The Tracy Peerage Case of Benjamin Wheatley Tracey, esquire, a lieutenant of her majesty's Royal Navy, claiming titles, honors, and dignities of Viscount and baron Tracy, of Rathcoole, in the Kingdom of Ireland, with petition to her majesty, and observations thereon*.

⁵⁰ On the difficulties of Warren's use of law in literature, see Steig.

⁵¹ On Warren's legal career, see Dunlop.

⁵² Warren explains, in mocking detail, how an action of ejectment works (222-23). It was a legal fiction of some notoriety.

⁵³ According to the Tracy Peerage law report, the forged tombstone had not been produced in court by 1845.

⁵⁴ See also Alexander, and Hayes.

⁵⁵ Collins's forged tombstone – fabricated to show that Laura is dead (when actually Glyde and Fosco have incarcerated her in an asylum) – even gives a "Narrative" as quasi-legal evidence (414).

⁵⁶ Even with the aid of a search tool on a digitalised version of the pre-1865 or "nominate" reports – the "English Reports" – I can find no other law report of the Tracy Peerage case.

⁵⁷ Charles Dickens had seen the forger and poisoner Thomas Griffiths Wainewright in Newgate gaol (Forster, *Life* 1: 111); he also knew the forger Thomas Powell (Friedman, "Heep and Powell" 37-39).

Both materialise in his fiction (see chapters 2 and 3). There was second-hand acquaintance too: in *Sensational Victorian*, Wolff notes that, “The career of Sleaford [in Braddon’s *The Doctor’s Wife*] owed something to MEB’s personal acquaintance with the son of an actual forger” (420 n. 6).

⁵⁸ Other records of forgery cases included the Newgate calendar-style publications on celebrated forgers, such as Wraxall’s *Criminal Celebrities* (1861), *Sensation Trials; or Causes Célèbres* (1865), by “Civilian,” or Woodall’s *Collection of Reports of Celebrated Trials, Civil and Criminal* (1873).

There were further sources readily available to novelists who were lawyers, too: the pre-1865 (or “nominate”) trial reports, for example, or those newspapers aimed at the legal profession, such as the *Law Magazine* or *Law Times*. (Celebrated forgers appeared in the *Law Times* in the following issues: 20 Aug. 1853, 23 Feb. 1856, 1 Mar. 1856, 15 Mar. 1856, 23 Aug. 1862, 30 Aug. 1862, 4 Oct. 1862, 7 Mar. 1874, and 21 Mar. 1874.)

⁵⁹ Although McEvoy is writing about late twentieth-century newspapers, he at no point makes a significant distinction between these and Victorian newspapers.

⁶⁰ The process was sometimes a cause for public concern. See “Newspaper Comments on Legal Proceedings,” a response to the sensationalist reporting of the Tichborne Claimant case in 1872.

⁶¹ A few forgery trial reports are not listed in *Palmer’s Index*. Nevertheless, the *Index* serves well as a rough guide and all the following forgery statistics, unless otherwise stated, are compiled from it. I do not list the forgery reports for these years in my bibliography, unless I have cited a particular report. (Using the digitalised version of the *Index*, one can be compiled in minutes, however.)

⁶² This appears to be an anomaly in the sample. According to Zedner, in the early to mid-Victorian period approximately a third of those committed to trial for forgery were women. Her explanation is that forgery and its related offences “were skilled crimes, requiring neither strength nor brutality, which women could pursue within the secrecy of their homes” (39).

⁶³ The *Law Times*, a publication naturally sensitive to forgers who fell into this category, frequently expressed concern at the number of solicitors who had been convicted of forgery. On 8 March 1862, for example, Henry Wells Young, a solicitor, was reported to have forged and uttered two powers of attorney. On 29 March, another solicitor, Joseph Shaw, was found to have forged deeds and promissory notes. By the very nature of their job, solicitors had plenty of opportunity for forgery. In “The ‘Flash’ Attorney,” *Bentley’s Miscellany* criticised the profession for precisely this offence.

⁶⁴ Upper-class forgers were given a much higher profile in general trial literature, however. Henry Fauntleroy's forgeries, for example, were featured in Burke's *Celebrated Trials connected with the Upper Classes of Society in the Relations of Public Life* (1851). It was widely perceived that forgery was a crime committed by the middle and upper classes. Indeed, Emsley states that eighteenth-century capital legislation for forgery "was aimed principally at forgers from the respectable classes" (255).

⁶⁵ For a thorough statistical study of sentences imposed on those convicted for forgery (and coining offences) in the Black Country, 1835-60, see Philips 234, table 34.

⁶⁶ See "Criminal Trials" 22 Aug. 1845 and 9 Apr. 1857. Gambling was often perceived to be the reason for much forgery. See "Slaves of the Ring."

⁶⁷ Sixty-seven per cent of men were deemed literate in 1840, 69.3 per cent in 1851, and 97.2 per cent in 1900; for women, the corresponding percentages were 51 per cent, 54.8 per cent, and 96.8 per cent (Flint, "The Victorian Novel and its Readers" 19). Robb argues, "The proliferation of paper transactions and paper securities made white-collar crime even more difficult to detect" (23). A commentator in 1876, however, held the contrary view: see Pike 2: 539-41.

⁶⁸ Victorians felt keenly the increasing sophistication of their society and the perils to which this exposed them: "crimes involving a long train of deeply planned deceit and forgery can only take place in times when money and property are attended with complex and artificial relations" ("The Roupell Case," *Saturday Review* 212).

⁶⁹ See "The Police and Thieves" (1856), which records that some detectives specialised in capturing forgers (175), and Taylor.

⁷⁰ Robb argues that, "Until the 1950s the agencies of law enforcement in England played a minimal role in the prevention, discovery or prosecution of white-collar crime" (160). But prevention is notoriously difficult to assess accurately today, let alone with regard to the Victorian era. Moreover, many of the forgers in *The Times* reports were not, in fact, "white-collar" criminals.

⁷¹ See "Bank Notes and Forgeries" (1850), which distinguishes between past and present types of forgery.

⁷² On the financial history of the Bank Charter Act, see E. Victor Morgan 143-64.

⁷³ In 1862-64, at least seven reports were devoted to the Roupell forgery case. (See chapter four.)

⁷⁴ Between 1865-80, years for which reliable statistics are available, only three to four per cent of all committals to trial were for forgery (Zedner 314-15, table 4b). A *Times* report gives some idea of the numbers that were involved between the years 1848-58:

Between 1848 and 1857 there were in the Central Criminal Court 78 prosecutions for the forgery of Bank of England notes, and 1,814 for making or uttering base coin. In England and Wales the number of prosecutions for coining in the above 10 years amounted to 4,874, or 487.4 on the average per year. In the five years 1847-51 there were 3,373 prosecutions for offences against the currency and forgery in England and Wales, including 844 cases of forgery, and 2,351 of uttering base money. In Scotland there were 570 coining cases between 1848 and 1858. ("Forgery and Coining")

⁷⁵ Dickens certainly had. In 1852, Barber's story was told over two issues of *Household Words* (written anonymously by W. Moy Thomas).

⁷⁶ I discuss which trials may be detected in which novels in the following chapters.

⁷⁷ See Blake 70-71, 95, and Davis.

⁷⁸ I return to this point in my consideration of Madeleine Smith and *Madeleine Graham* in chapter 3.

⁷⁹ See Bentley 43-49.

⁸⁰ See Altick, *The English Common Reader* 318-64, which briefly and lucidly charts how and why newspapers and their readerships massively increased during the nineteenth century.

⁸¹ For a sense of the complexity of Victorian literary production, see Brake.

⁸² Grossman refines Altick's point (34-36, 137-50), detailing how Bulwer-Lytton's *Paul Clifford* (1830) and *Eugene Aram* (1832) developed the criminal biography genre, as typified by the *Newgate Calendar*. A fine example of forgery-related street literature is *The Life of Robert Avery* (1805). This forty-four-page octavo pamphlet chronicles the life of Robert Avery, who was executed for forgery on 23 March 1805. Avery himself wrote it after his conviction, and there are various other documents included in the pamphlet. Printed by T. Baker and Son, it was sold at their library and at neighbouring booksellers in Southampton. Touchingly, the profits of sales, the pamphlet claims, were to go towards the support of Avery's now destitute child.

⁸³ See Altick, *The English Common Reader* 291-93. Occasionally, the link between novels and street literature was very direct indeed. Braddon, who frequently featured forgery in her novels, had also written stories for G. W. M. Reynolds's *Miscellany* and the *Halfpenny Magazine* (Wolff, *Sensational Victorian* 118-33). Trollope gives his (not very flattering) idea of a Reynolds's *Miscellany* reader – Mrs. Moulder – in *Orley Farm* (1: 238). An instructive exception to this linkage is George Eliot's *Romola* (1863), the only novel of hers that depicts forgery. Mentioned briefly in a conversation

between two Renaissance Florentines, Tito and Bardo, Eliot's forgery is deftly aligned with high culture (69). Her notion of the crime here is a world away from that which we find in, say, Reynolds's *The Mysteries of London* (1846-50), a series that was reputed to sell forty thousand copies a week (Sutherland, *Victorian Novelists and Publishers* 41).

⁸⁴ See chapter four.

⁸⁵ In his next novel, *A Tale of Two Cities* (1859), which immediately preceded *The Woman in White* in *All The Year Round*, Dickens even returned to the crime explicitly within the context of Newgate at the time of the Bloody Code. There, he brooded ironically on the crime's former penalty: "Death is Nature's remedy for all things, and why not Legislation's? Accordingly, the forger was put to death; the utterer of a bad note was put to Death [...]" (84). Collins's sensation novel, too, as Hughes suggests (*Maniac* 8-9), was indebted to Newgate literature.

⁸⁶ Collins also published a story based on the forger Henry Fauntleroy, who was hanged in 1824 (see chapter 4).

⁸⁷ In the introduction to his edition, Sutherland suggests that Hartright might be the executioner, xxiii.

⁸⁸ These deaths are also indebted to literary influences. Edward Fitzgerald, writing to Frederick Tennyson on 29 January 1867, opined, "I wish Sir Percival Glyde's death were a little less of the minor Theatre sort" (124). Moreover, Sucksmith argues that Merdle's crime and manner of death owe much to Samuel Warren's "The Forger," a Newgate-style tale published in 1830 in *Blackwood's*. In using Sadleir, however, Dickens validated the authority and relevance of such literary influences. Even post 1837, their definition of forgery as a crime associated with death rang true.

⁸⁹ Compare with Sue Grafton, a modern-day best-selling author who has almost worked her way through the A to Z of crime. In an interview for *The University of Louisville Magazine*, she said, "I'd also intended to write 'F is for Forgery,' but when I started doing the research I decided forgery was too boring a crime" (Dodd and Heckel). One cannot imagine such a comment from a best-selling mid-Victorian novelist. In the BBC's adaptation of *The Woman in White* (1997), moreover, Glyde's secret is paedophilia, not forgery. Forgery possessed for the Victorians a power to shock that is perhaps lost on a modern audience.

⁹⁰ Even relatively respectable working-class radical fiction, such as Ernest Jones's *Woman's Wrongs* – published serially in *Notes to the People* 1850-51 – drew heavily for its form and language on Reynolds-style crime melodrama. The genre flourished throughout the century (see Springhall).

⁹¹ The marketing of *Orley Farm* (1861-62) was duly cautious, however. The *Cornhill* – in which journal Trollope’s novel was serialised – reassured its readership that “There is no false glare of melodramatic interest, there is none of the prurient curiosity awakened by celebrated criminals” (158).

⁹² Embezzlement, by contrast, did not. Collins could just as easily have pioneered embezzlement as a sensational crime. Like forgery, embezzlement was a white-collar crime associated with secrecy, fashion and modernity. According to Binny, embezzlement “arise[s] from fast life, extravagant habits, and gambling” (385).

⁹³ This sample was chiefly compiled from reviews in the *Athenaeum*, the *Saturday Review* and speculative reading based on keyword searches in the British Library and Bodleian catalogues.

⁹⁴ *Secrets of My Office*, by “A Bill-Broker”; *The Trials of the Tredgolds*, by Edward Dutton Cook; *Madeleine Graham*, by Emma Robinson; *Wylder’s Hand*, by Sheridan Le Fanu; *Bella Donna; or the Cross Before the Name*, by Gilbert Dyce; *Dorothy Dovedale’s Trials*, by Thomas Miller; *Roger Whatmough’s Will*, by John Bradford; *Henry Dunbar: the Story of an Outcast*, by Mary Elizabeth Braddon; *The Doctor’s Wife*, by Mary Elizabeth Braddon; *Loved at Last: A Story*, by Mark Lemon; *Jeanne Laraguay: a Novel*, by Eugénie Hamerton; *Superior to Adversity; or the Romance of a Clouded Life*, by Walter Stephens; and *Oswald Cray*, by Ellen Wood.

⁹⁵ I am using the category loosely. Although Mary Elizabeth Braddon won her literary reputation as a sensation novelist, she was not bound by the genre (see Sparks).

⁹⁶ According to Sutherland, “the majority of lesser novelists” were to be found in “the three-decker” format (*Victorian Novelists and Publishers* 24).

⁹⁷ Of the 1860s, Skilton remarks, “At no time in our literary history were more good novels being published and read” (Introduction, *Lady Audley’s Secret* vii).

⁹⁸ Moreover, to include a sample of those serialised novels that were not republished in book form would, given the sensational nature of most newspaper fiction, probably increase the frequency further. Graham Law gives a good idea of the terrain in *Serializing Fiction*.

⁹⁹ This paragraph is summarised from Altick, *Studies in Scarlet* 17-134, Brantlinger 147-49, Hughes, *Maniac* 27.

¹⁰⁰ For an extended account of how the newspaper contributed to the realism of sensation fiction in the 1860s, see Boyle, *Black Swine in the Sewers of Hampstead* 39-200.

¹⁰¹ In one cynical review, the *Athenaeum* gave its opinion on the sort of novelist that these new publishing conditions could create. Of one who had “made up his mind to do something in the way of authorship,” the anonymous reviewer explained how, “After racking his brain for an idea, without any satisfactory result, a thought strikes [the aspiring author]: he will try to get a subject out of the newspapers! There is always something going on in the newspapers – a murder, or a trial, or a robbery, which might, perhaps, be turned to good account – who knows?” (Rev. of *Gentle Blood; or, The Secret Marriage* 763). See also the *Athenaeum*’s review of Emma Robinson’s *Madeleine Graham*. Mary Elizabeth Braddon was so sensitive to such criticism that in *The Doctor’s Wife* (1864), it seems, she self-reflexively included the character of Sigismund Smith, a sensation hack writer who gets his material from the newspapers. Her own fiction, she protests through this characterisation, is nothing like Sigismund Smith’s. (See Gilbert 106-112.)

¹⁰² Indeed, Braddon – one of those authors attacked in Mansel’s article – wrote asking Bulwer-Lytton in May 1863 whether “the sensational [can] be elevated by art.” It is a rhetorical question, for she then praises *Lucretia* for being “sensational” and “as interesting as it is sublimely grand” (Wolff, “Devoted Disciple” 14).

¹⁰³ See chapter three. A contributor to *Notes and Queries* in May 1852, for example, recalled the details of a twenty-year-old forgery case (“Mitigation of Capital Punishment to a Forger” 445). He cannot have been exceptional.

¹⁰⁴ Such problems of influence were readily recognised by Victorian reviewers. The *Athenaeum* wrote in August 1867: “Some months since [...] we showed how all the leading incidents connected with the pending claim upon the Titchborne [*sic*] baronetcy had been set forth with such minuteness in a novel called ‘Not Dead Yet,’ two years before the claimant to that baronetcy made his pretensions known, that had the novel been a statement of actual occurrences, and the claimant’s case merely a work of fiction, few critics would have hesitated to assert that the latter was a literal reproduction of the former” (Rev. of *A Golden Heart* 173).

¹⁰⁵ These are the questions raised by Le Fanu’s *Wylder’s Hand*. I discuss them in chapter three.

¹⁰⁶ Obvious examples include the “social problem novels” of Elizabeth Gaskell, Disraeli or Dickens. Krueger’s position on the potential agency of the novel illustrates how accommodating of these claims modern criticism can be. I discuss the matter in detail in chapter four.

¹⁰⁷ See, respectively, Ruthven, Baines and Groom. An interesting exception to this pattern is Briefel's discussion of art forgery and the Victorian novel.

¹⁰⁸ These range from the bibliographical *Fakes and Frauds* (1989), edited by Myers and Harris, to Stewart's theoretical *Crimes of Writing* (1991). Also see Grafton, *Forgers and Critics* (1990) and Rosenblum, *Practice to Deceive* (2000). For some of the great Victorian literary forgers, see Collins's *The Two Forgers* (1992), Ian Haywood's profile of John Payne Collier in *Faking It* (1987), chapter three, and Soderholm's monograph on the Major Byron forgeries, *Fantasy, Forgery and the Byron Legend* (1996). Victorian periodicals were certainly fascinated by the literary forgers of their own age. (In the late 1860s, the *Athenaeum* reported for months on the case of Vrain-Denis Lucas, who had forged a correspondence from Newton to Pascal that had duped the French Academy of Sciences. See issue numbers 2083, 2156, 2170, 2188, 2190, 2191, 2192).

¹⁰⁹ My account of *The Forger's Shadow* is taken and adapted from my review of the book in the *Times Literary Supplement*. See also Haywood's *The Making of History* (1987) and Kahan's study of William Henry Ireland, *Reforging Shakespeare* (1998).

¹¹⁰ Even theory-orientated critics tend to take the same approach. Of Collins's *Basil* (1852), Rance writes:

Mannion's father had forged on a bond the signature of Basil's father, while relying on the intimacy with his patron to inhibit the latter from testifying against him. This is a miscalculation derived from that of Dr. William Dodd, who forged on a bond the signature of his own patron, the Earl of Chesterfield. Like Dodd, Mannion's father is hanged: Basil's father, like Chesterfield, is honour-bound to declare the truth. (7)

¹¹¹ Bulwer-Lytton, perhaps the most Romantic of Romantic Victorian novelists, is an arguable exception, as I discuss in chapter two.

¹¹² One of the most compelling defences of the Victorian novel's peculiar receptivity to psychoanalytic criticism has been offered by Alexander Welsh, who has observed that the Victorian novel's psychological, emotional and verbal patterns anticipate many of those formalised by Freud's models of the human mind (*Copyright to Copperfield* 168-70, *George Eliot and Blackmail* 337-77).

¹¹³ Such considerations are beyond my thesis, but Maria Edgeworth's novel *Helen* (1834), for example, suggests that there might have been a transitional mode between eighteenth-century literary forgery's shaping of Romantic poetry and nineteenth-century criminal forgery's influence on the form of the Victorian novel. In its depiction of some love letters that, with forged additions, have been published and then destroyed before they can be distributed, *Helen* is a precursor of those Victorian novels that

represent felonious forgery. Teasing out typically Romantic ideas of authentic authorship, truthful and fabricated writing, and playing on the danger to reputations posed by creative textual forgeries, *literary* forgery presents itself in *Helen* as a potential site of a textual anxiety. In this last respect, *Helen* anticipates the mid-Victorian novel's characteristic use of representations of *criminal* forgery.

¹¹⁴ I do not consider the Stirling trial of 1839 in detail, for example, because I can find its possible influence only in *Ten Thousand-A-Year* (1841), a novel that precedes my chosen period. Likewise, the financial forgeries of Leopold Redpath are omitted because John Sadleir's similar swindles were discovered around the same time and, in my opinion, made a greater impression on the development of the novel.

¹¹⁵ Though in some of my chapters I am, I hope, answering James Boyd White and Peter Goodrich's calls for critical approaches that play on both law's literariness and literature's quasi-legal power, my intention is not to write an interdisciplinary study.

¹¹⁶ Purely in terms of its interest in literary form, my thesis may be placed in the tradition of George Levine's *The Realistic Imagination* (1981), which views the novel as a genre that "self-consciously examines its own fictionality" through its "continuing experiments with forms, styles [and] modes of valuing [...]" (21).

2. Forgers and Realisms

This chapter tests a syllogism professed, I believe, by a number of Victorian novels that feature forgery. Realisms are copies of the real.¹ Real-life forgeries are illegal copies of the real. Spurious realisms may be explored in terms of felonious forgery. George Levine has shown that while Victorian realist fiction took an essentialist and empirical view of the world to which it referred, and generally assumed that this world could – in theory - be represented accurately by language, Victorian realist fiction also acknowledged the tremendous difficulty it faced in trying to achieve representations that appeared valid to contemporary readers. In this chapter I build on Levine's work by examining several Victorian novels that were not manifestly realist novels, but were, nevertheless, obsessed with realism in one way or other. I analyse and evaluate how, through their representations of fictional forgers or forgery, each of these novels conceived of a specific type of literary misrepresentation as a kind of forgery. As realist representations that had failed to convince their readers, exposed real-life forgeries were, I argue, potential sites on which a Victorian novel could address its own issues of realist representation.

Encompassing ideas of mimesis, fidelity, truthfulness, honesty, and psychological consistency, and based on models drawn from art, photography, science or law, Victorian realism was, of course, as various as Victorian fiction itself. Realism also had a variable moral context. David Skilton records that “[t]he word ‘realism’ entered the language in the late 1850s,” when it acquired, “in general a more agnostic tendency” (*The Early and Mid-Victorian Novel* 86, 90).² Before this time, he notes, “the criterion of ‘truth-to-life’ [was] united with the highest Victorian moral and religious aspirations” (90). Although the relationship between ethics and

verisimilitude was consistently important to Victorian critical conceptions of realisms, it was particularly so in the 1840s and 1850s.³

In “Realism in Art: Recent German Fiction” (1858), G. H. Lewes gave an exposition of this relationship that, while drawing on Romantic notions of sincerity and authenticity, also hinted at a possible juridical context.

Art always aims at the representation of Reality, *i.e.* of Truth [...] Realism is thus the basis of all Art, and its antithesis is not Idealism, but *Falsism* [...] To misrepresent the forms of ordinary life is no less an offence than to misrepresent the forms of ideal life: a pug-nosed Apollo, or Jupiter in a great-coat, would not be more truly shocking to an artistic mind than are those senseless falsifications of nature into which incompetence is led under the pretence of ‘beautifying nature’ [...] [T]he sentiment must be real, truly expressed as a sentiment, and as the sentiment of the very people represented [...] [T]he novelist [...] must be rigidly bound down to accuracy in the presentation [...] (102-03)

Lewes’s essay refocuses the ethical criteria of previous critical writing on realism using three of forgery’s closest lexical associates: “misrepresent,” “pretence,” and “falsification.” Boldly, Lewes discards the traditional Romanticist opposition of realism with Idealism, and replaces it with “*Falsism*.” His neologism, and its associated terms, echoes the common law definition of forgery: “‘making a false document with intent to defraud’” (Stephen, *History* 3: 186). Although Lewes’s incompetent novelist might not *mean* to make a “falsification,” he nevertheless commits the act of uttering it. In decrying “*Falsism*” as an “offence,” Lewes’s language further appeals to a mid-Victorian criminological analogy. Lewes is, after all, legislating for representation in Victorian fiction. In Lewes’s judgement, his own broad conception of realism constitutes legitimate representation in Victorian fiction. “*Falsism*,” he implies, is Victorian fiction’s equivalent of a forgery at law.

That Victorian fiction itself should have frequently taken some notional form of literary representation as genuine, and then set it against one that it deemed false – all within a representation of forgery - should, therefore, come as no surprise. My selection of those novels that do so is fairly representative: *Lucretia* (1846, rev. 1853), a provocative Newgate novel, by Edward Bulwer-Lytton, upper-class literary innovator and theorist; *The Forgery* (1849), a picaresque three-volume novel, by G. P. R. James, best-selling novelist, diplomat and historiographer royal; *Ruth* (1853), a gritty realist novel addressing the social problem of unmarried mothers, by Elizabeth Gaskell, middle-class Manchester Unitarian; *David Copperfield* (1849-50), a serialised *Künstlerroman*, by Charles Dickens, successful self-made professional author; *The Adventures of Philip* (1861-62), a traditional realist novel that is also a precursor of the psychological novel, by William Makepeace Thackeray, Dickens's upmarket counterpart. To varying degrees and in different ways, all these novels owe aspects of their plots, characters, themes, and form, to a particular real-life forger.

2.1 Thomas Griffiths Wainewright, *Lucretia*, and the Forgeries of Mimesis

The most infamous real-life forger of the early Victorian period was Thomas Griffiths Wainewright. A high-living dandy in debt, he forged and uttered powers of attorney in 1822 and 1823, thereby appropriating money left to him in trust by his grandfather. Convicted in 1837, he was transported to Van Diemen's Land, where he died a decade later. Wainewright's notoriety, however, arose from the well-grounded (but legally

unproven) suspicion that he had poisoned not only his uncle in 1828 (for his estate), but also his mother-in-law in 1829 (because he could), and, most scandalously of all, one of his wife's half-sisters, Helen Abercrombie, in 1830 (for her life insurance).⁴ With Wainewright, forgery acquired – very publicly - connotations of murderous malice and poison.⁵

Wainewright and the Victorians

Many Victorian accounts of Wainewright were driven by a concern with what lay beneath appearances. Superficially, Wainewright was a man of intelligence, culture and talent. He had exhibited, many times, at the Royal Academy; he knew Henry Fuseli, William Blake, John Clare, John Keats, William Hazlitt, and Thomas De Quincey; and he wrote, with wit and verve, for the *London Magazine*.⁶ Wainewright's Victorian biographers - Walter Thornbury, John Camden Hotten, and W. Carew Hazlitt, for example - sought in various ways to reveal the depth of the evil concealed by this glittering surface.

Victorians who took less overtly biographical approaches to Wainewright came to different conclusions about his cultural significance. Havelock Ellis, viewing Wainewright with pseudo-scientific objectivity, saw him in *The Criminal* (1890) as an exemplar of a particular criminal type. In *William Blake* (1868), Algernon Charles Swinburne expressed his admiration for the fastidiousness that characterised both Wainewright's poisoning and his art. Oscar Wilde followed Swinburne's lead in "Pen, Pencil and Poison: A Study in Green" (1889). In a typical paradox, Wilde triumphantly presented Wainewright's forgeries as signs of the authentic artistic

personality.⁷ From being a cautionary example of Romanticism's gentlemanly darkness, Wainewright became the provocative herald of *fin de siècle* aestheticism.

Bulwer-Lytton, *Lucretia*, and Wainewright

Inevitably, Victorian novelists seized upon his story, too. Fragments of Wainewright may perhaps be found most frequently in Charles Dickens's fiction.⁸ Within a single Victorian novel, however, Wainewright appears most extensively in Edward Bulwer-Lytton's *Lucretia*. The life of Bulwer-Lytton (1803-1873) has been well documented,⁹ but several biographical strands are relevant to his treatment of Wainewright. Bulwer-Lytton was a remarkable literary experimenter, developing genres as various as the silver fork novel (*Pelham* [1828]), science fiction (*The Coming Race* [1871]), domestic realism (*The Caxtons* [1849]), detective fiction (*Night and Morning* [1841]), and the historical novel (*Rienzi* [1835]). His crime novels, which include *Paul Clifford* (1830), *Eugene Aram* (1832), and *Lucretia* (1846), earned him a reputation as a leading Newgate novelist. Yet it is the novel commonly associated with his lifelong absorption in the occult, *Zanoni* (1842), which perhaps best expresses the metaphysics underlying much of his fiction.¹⁰ Despite his historical importance as an innovator of the novel form, and his relative success as a novelist in his own lifetime, Bulwer-Lytton's literary achievements were – and still are – eclipsed by the likes of Dickens (with whom he initially enjoyed a warm friendship) and Thackeray (whom he despised as his public detractor). In addition to his work as a novelist, Bulwer-Lytton had a significant political career.¹¹ As his commitment to both these enterprises suggests, he was intensely interested in the relationship between fiction and society.

In his 1846 preface to *Lucretia*, Bulwer-Lytton clearly marked Wainewright as his inspiration for Gabriel Varney, the novel's forger. Bulwer-Lytton had been fascinated by the criminal mind in *Eugene Aram* and by a real-life forger in *The Disowned* (1828).¹² These concerns converge in *Lucretia*. Gabriel Varney, an artist, is entitled to receive the interest on a trust fund set up by his uncle. To get hold of the capital of £6,000, Varney poisons his uncle, forges the trustees' signatures, and is eventually transported for the crime. In the opinion of his friend, John Forster, Bulwer-Lytton had "[m]ost powerfully, and [...] with minute fidelity [...] depicted and shown [Wainewright's] incarnate cowardice, cruelty, and wickedness." But he had also exercised "a certain abatement of [Wainewright's] diabolical crime [i.e. poisoning] [...]" (Rev. of *Lucretia* 772). Bulwer-Lytton had let Wainewright loose in *Lucretia*, but fundamentally as a forger rather than as a poisoner.

Bulwer-Lytton's chief source of information: Henry P. Smith

Bulwer-Lytton's material for his fictional forger came mainly from an unusual source: the archive of Eagle Insurance, one of the several companies that Wainewright had tried to defraud.¹³ In order to research his new novel, Bulwer-Lytton had asked to see the Eagle's Wainewright papers. These were sent to him by one of the company's agents, Henry P. Smith. In a letter dated 26 May 1846, and partially quoted by Andrew Motion (285), Smith reported that Wainewright had "confessed that he used strychnine and morphine" to kill his relations.¹⁴ More remarkable, however, is the part of this letter that neither Motion nor any other of Wainewright's biographers quotes. Smith, who seems to have been on cordial terms with Bulwer-Lytton, closes his missive with a surprising sentence: "If you come across any mesmeric results in

which you have confidence I shall feel obliged by your letting me a pist [?] at the séance” (Smith DE/K C2/42).

Presumably, Smith is referring to one of the many séances that Bulwer-Lytton held at Knebworth House.¹⁵ As a whole and including the postscript, the letter is concerned with finding out about Wainewright. It is extremely unlikely that the sentence concerning mesmerism is totally unconnected to that which precedes or follows it. Smith had apparently met Bulwer-Lytton on 25 May,¹⁶ when we may infer the topic came up. Was Smith implying that Wainewright, still alive in Van Diemen’s Land, could be contacted mesmerically? Victorian notions of mesmerism did allow for such a possibility. Alison Winter explains that mesmeric “[s]ubjects might claim to see events [...] in distant lands” (3), and “mesmeric communication” even appeared achievable (326). Bulwer-Lytton was seriously interested in mesmerism (Wolff, *Strange Stories* 233-64). In his 1846 preface to *Lucretia*, however, he said that he had composed *Lucretia* by studying “histories” (viii) and, in “A Word to the Public,” that his material was drawn from “writings, and correspondence” (325).

Smith’s remarks should not be dismissed lightly, though. Smith oversaw Bulwer-Lytton’s entire literary project on Wainewright. In such words and phrases as “making a further search,” “found,” “this led me to,” or “my first enquiries” (DE/K C2/42), Smith presents himself in his letters of 1846 as Bulwer-Lytton’s private detective, tracking down Wainewright’s literary trail. He played an unusually active part in turning a real-life forger into a fictional one, even pointing out to Bulwer-Lytton that, “without my connecting information, the papers tell no tale whatever” (DE/K C2/43). Smith implies that only he can make the Eagle archive speak its story. Bulwer-Lytton’s novel, in turn, is the insurance agent’s quasi-divine court of justice. In a letter dated 2 May 1849, Smith wrote approvingly that Wainewright “ha[d] been

damned in *Lucretia*” (DE/K C2/41). Smith is an extraordinary contemporary reader.¹⁷ His reference to mesmerism is apparently sincere. In May 1846, it seems, Smith had entertained the notion that Bulwer-Lytton’s treatment of Wainewright might turn out to be not only a conventional fictional portrayal, but also a psychically induced textual manifestation of Wainewright’s criminal mind. Smith offers us a tantalizing glimpse of a uniquely Victorian conception, one that is simply incredible to us, of how real-life forgers might enter fiction.

The critical reception of *Lucretia* and Bulwer’s defence

In the opinion of the critics, Wainewright had, at least, assumed a disturbing presence within *Lucretia*. *The Times* advised Bulwer-Lytton, “As you love your reputation and the privilege useful to your generation, Sir Edward Bulwer Lytton, avoid for the future all novels ‘founded upon fact.’” The *Morning Herald* pointed out that “The great body of the people are too apt to sympathize with criminals.” There was, as Bulwer lamented in a letter to John Forster, a “wholesale and general attack” on the book. Keith Hollingsworth, who has chronicled this critical onslaught in detail and from whom these quotations are taken (191-202), attributes it, in part, to the fact that Bulwer-Lytton had applied a penny-dreadful technique to a novel (198).¹⁸ Hollingsworth cites Thackeray (writing as M. A. Titmarsh): “a poet does not take his inspirations from the copy-book or his pictures from the police-office” (199). Almost all the negative reviews were based on the premise that Bulwer-Lytton had committed this solecism.¹⁹ In turning Wainewright into text, *Lucretia* had extended his harmful reach.

The relationship between a novel and real-life crime was a matter of considerable importance in the 1840s. When *Blackwood's* published an article on rising crime in July 1844,²⁰ it was voicing a contemporary perception that modern historians have concluded were grounded in fact (Gatrell and Hadden 372-75). In 1805, 4,605 people were prosecuted in assizes and quarter sessions; the total for 1842 was 31,309 (Wiener 50). In 1835, Alphonse Quetelet (who helped found the London Statistical Society) even claimed that it was possible “to enumerate in advance how many individuals [...] [would] be forgers.” (qtd. in Wiener 163). These remarkable increases in crime statistics were largely the result of recent legislation that had made various anti-social activities criminal offences (Wiener 46-91). Even so, the middle classes in the 1840s were especially panicked by this tsunami of criminality. Novelists who transcribed real-life criminals into their fiction at this time attracted an uncomfortable question: were they contributing to the crime-wave by glamorising crime?

In “A Word to the Public” (1847), Bulwer-Lytton sought to exonerate himself of such a charge. He declared that crime was “the foe man must brave” (314). Claiming that *Lucretia* was firmly committed to that fight, he argued that, for the novel to “preach wholesome lessons to the intellect, and awaken lively self-examination in the heart” (329), the fictional criminal had to be “life-like” (325). Bulwer-Lytton saw his realistic presentation of Varney as a way of inoculating his middle-class readership against “the minor seductions of evil” (332). In using Wainwright as a recognisable model for Varney, artist and forger, he wanted to “suggest useful reflections [...] [to] inculcate a salutary lesson [...] to illustrate some serviceable truth” (318), and to show what happens to one “who had prostituted the perfection of his physical senses to their vilest gratifications” (328). Varney, he points

out, becomes a forger and “is sentenced to the coarsest of hardships, the vilest of labour [...]” (ibid.). Bulwer-Lytton argued that the potentially criminal mind, even Wainwright’s before it turned to crime, could be redirected towards good. In his view, the forger was nurtured rather than born: “in Varney, the versatile, lively, impressionable fancy, [...] [if] purified and guided, [...] may conduct to art” (327). Moreover, Bulwer-Lytton maintained that he had always drawn a clear distinction between the crime and the criminal: “no compassion for the murderer lessens our horror of the murder” (317). This, he contended, was essentially the “moral design” of *Lucretia* (1853 preface, v). The ethics of Bulwer-Lytton’s realistic representation of Wainwright appear to have been both planned and, to judge from his private correspondence, sincere.²¹

The oddity of how Bulwer-Lytton represented Wainwright in *Lucretia*

In one major respect, Bulwer-Lytton and his critics were in accord. Both parties agreed that Varney was a remarkably realistic representation of Wainwright.²² As *The Times* advertisement said of Bulwer-Lytton’s composition of Varney, “not a trait or a touch is lost that can give a reality” (“Sir Edward Bulwer Lytton’s New Work”). But Bulwer-Lytton’s connection to Henry P. Smith, I shall now demonstrate, suggests a more complex relationship between Wainwright and Varney, one that raises important questions about Bulwer-Lytton’s approach to “life-like” realism in *Lucretia*.

Smith had directed Bulwer-Lytton to Wainwright’s contributions to the *London Magazine*, written 1820-23 (Smith DE/K C2 43). Bulwer-Lytton’s comment in “A Word to the Public” that Wainwright was “a critic, and a writer of liveliness

and versatility” (325) suggests that he had followed Smith’s advice. In “Exhibition of the Royal Academy,” Bulwer-Lytton would have read Wainewright’s attack on “servile transcription” (154) in painting, and his criticism of “the delineators of bitten apples, cut fingers, and all the long list of the results of mere diligent observation and patient imitation of objects intrinsically worthless [...]” (162). In his articles for the *London Magazine*, Wainewright was consistently disapproving of “simple, indiscriminative *imitation*” (“C. Van Vinkbooms” 197). And yet, in Bulwer-Lytton’s portrait of Varney the artist, Wainewright is seen only to “mimic” (*Lucretia* 198). Varney “stud[ies] externals” (143) and paints merely that which he observes. In Varney, Bulwer-Lytton had incarcerated Wainewright in a fictional identity strikingly at odds with what Bulwer-Lytton would have known about him as a writer and art critic.

How can this oddity be satisfactorily explained? First: a brief sketch of Bulwer-Lytton’s own views on artistic representation. For Bulwer-Lytton, as James L. Campbell neatly summarises, there were “two contending worlds: the actual (the material) and the ideal (the spiritual)” (48). The true – or Idealist - artist must strive to exist in the latter world.²³ Though vaguely defined,²⁴ Bulwer-Lytton’s Idealism presupposed universal truths; the artist could access these, moreover, only by a kind of intuitive spiritual insight. He must “perpetually compare his senses with the pure images of which the senses only see the appearances” (*Lucretia* 143). The senses could show the artist the way to an Idealist vision of reality, but they must not be confused with reality itself. Varney is thus the antithesis of the Idealist artist. He has “over-cultivate[d] the art that connects itself with the senses” (ibid.). He affects to show a reality in his paintings when he offers only “appearances” (ibid.) derived from “the veil of the senses” (289).²⁵ His “sensual villainy” (291) refers directly to the

smothering of an artist's Idealist vision by Lockean materialism.²⁶ In *Lucretia's* artistic scheme, "he had no *real* genius; it was a false apparition of the divine spirit" (143). Although Eigner is right to argue that "Bulwer was wrong to characterize mimetic realism condescendingly as 'the mere portraiture of outward society'" (*The Metaphysical Novel* 2), this was, nevertheless, Bulwer-Lytton's professed conception of mimetic realism.

Second, the deliberateness of Bulwer-Lytton's representation of Wainewright as a mimetic artist needs to be emphasised. Allan Conrad Christensen has shown how Bulwer-Lytton's artistic theories stemmed from his reading of German philosophical Idealism (113-14).²⁷ In "A Word to the Public," Bulwer-Lytton remarked that Wainewright had written "familiarily of Kant, and hint[ed] at a translation of Schelling" (325).²⁸ Bulwer-Lytton therefore knew that Wainewright was interested in the aesthetics championed by German Idealism. In his petition for a ticket-of-leave in 1844, Wainewright had openly declared himself a "*follower of the Ideal*" (Hazlitt 76). It is uncertain whether Bulwer-Lytton knew of this particular statement, though Wainewright's major nineteenth-century biographers – Allen, Hazlitt, Hotten and Thornbury – all quote it. If only from his reading of the *London Magazine*, however, Bulwer-Lytton would certainly have been familiar with Wainewright's general praise of Idealism and censure of mimesis.

Third, there is the matter of motive. In all likelihood, Bulwer-Lytton also knew of Wainewright's satirical comments on *The Disowned* and *Eugene Aram*, Bulwer-Lytton's earlier novels featuring real-life criminals. Wainewright had written a humorous verse attacking what A. G. Allen called "the Lytton-Bulwigian weakness for intellectual villainy":

In short, what's easier than that thing in vogue,

An honest rascal, or a noble rogue?
 What's easier than by help of lurking, hint
 To show a villain virtuous in print?
 And by a second hint's ingenious fetch
 To lavish pity for his *misused* wretch. (qtd. in Allen 303)

A “fetch” is a ghostly double: precisely that which Wainewright himself becomes in Varney. But Bulwer-Lytton studiously presented himself as the champion of the novel's importance in society.²⁹ Lampooning Wainewright through issues of artistic representation would have been far too petty and undignified for him.

Wainewright, Varney, and the criminal aesthetic of mimesis

An artistic reason for the oddity of Wainewright's depiction in *Lucretia* seems more likely. In his letter of 19 May 1846, Smith had told Bulwer-Lytton how Wainewright's forgeries were executed and how, via negotiations with the Bank of England, they were eventually presented for trial. In the same letter, Smith added, “You are perhaps aware that Wainewright was a writer” (DE/K C2 43). As Bulwer-Lytton would almost certainly have recognised, Wainewright was an Idealist writer and artist who had – in the act of his forgeries - committed a criminalized kind of mimesis. (In his petition for a ticket-of-leave, Wainewright had himself placed his artistic persona – the “*follower of the Ideal*” – in apposition to his official identity as “*Faussaire*” [Allen 320]). For the Idealist artist, imitative forgery was surely the worst of crimes. Bulwer-Lytton summoned Wainewright into *Lucretia*, I suggest, in order to make Wainewright confront not only the ethical implications of his forgeries, but also the true nature of his *aesthetic* villainy.

This lesson took a familiar form. Bulwer-Lytton prefaced his 1835 edition of *The Disowned* with an important critical essay, “On the Different Kinds of Prose

Fiction,” in which he divided the European novel into various categories. Of *The Disowned*, he said, “I essayed the metaphysical novel, which Germany has made illustrious; the development of the Abstract was its principal object” (xx). The metaphysical novel, he explains, “often invests itself in a dim and shadowy allegory which it deserts or resumes at will, making its action but the incarnations of some peculiar and abstract qualities whose development it follows out” (xvi). Mordaunt, a character in *The Disowned*, “is an allegory” showing “Love of Knowledge as producing necessarily the Love of Virtue” (xx), for example. Bulwer-Lytton also pointed out that novels, “[n]ot of this precise school of metaphysical composition,” could, nevertheless, be “still of a metaphysical nature” (xvi). Though extremely “life-like,” the character and story of Varney may also be read in several places, therefore, as a “dim and shadowy allegory.”

At Guy’s Oak (literally, a large tree), the young Varney is described killing a snake with a stick.³⁰ Varney “gazed, till the eye was sated” (57). Crucially, his stick is conflated with his artist’s eye: “Had he had pencil and tablet at that moment, he would have dropped his weapon for the sketch [...]” (ibid.). This conflation suggests that, when a pencil is governed by the mimetic artist’s vision, it kills the object of that gaze just as a weapon might do so. The “mangled and dissevered” (58) remains of the snake are figured as “winding as a poet’s thought through his verse” (ibid.). (In Bulwer-Lytton’s writings, the term “poet” usually refers to the novelist who embraces the Idealist mode of representation, the poetic and philosophically true conception of life.³¹) This strained simile therefore intimates that mimetic realism’s encounters with only the “appearances” (143) of reality destroy the objects of Idealist vision: the genuine reality that lies beneath “the veil of the senses” (289). The episode depicts

Varney's Fall at the tree of artistic knowledge. In Varney's allegorical function, we may see Bulwer-Lytton's reproof of Wainewright for his crimes of mimesis.

In emphasising how Varney is both a mimetic artist *and* a forger, *Lucretia* forcefully associates Varney's artistic method with forgery. Varney tells Lucretia,

"If this man, Stubmore, in whom the trust created by my uncle's will is now vested – once comes to town – once begins to bustle about his accursed projects of transferring the money from the Bank of England, I tell you again and again that my forgery on the bank will be detected, and that transportation will be the smallest penalty inflicted; part of the forgery, as you know, was committed on your behalf, to find monies necessary for the research for your son – committed on the clear understanding, that our project on Helen [i.e. poisoning her for the insurance money] should repay me – should enable me, perhaps, undetected, to restore the sums illegally abstracted, or, at the worst to confess to Stubmore, whose character well I know – that oppressed by difficulties, I had yielded to temptation – that I had forged his name (as I had forged his father's) as an authority to sell the capital from the bank, and that now, in replacing the money, I repaid my error, and threw myself on his indulgence – on his silence." (171-72)

Soon afterwards, the narrator laments how Helen, the intended victim of the poisoning plot, is gravely mistaken in holding positive thoughts about Varney. He judges

Varney as an artist:

How could Helen, whose slightest thought, when a star broke forth from a cloud, or a bird sung suddenly from the copse, had more of wisdom and of poetry than all Varney's gaudy and painted seemings ever could even mimic – how could she be so deceived? Yet so it was. (198)

What so distresses the narrator is that "a mind so susceptible as Helen's to admiration for art" (197) can be so easily "deceived." In his choice of the words "seemings" and "mimic," the narrator's remarks refer back to Varney's account of his forgeries, in which Helen's name is also prominent. Throughout *Lucretia*, Varney's forgeries and his artistic deceptions are presented as related products of the same artistic impulse.

Varney starts out as a mimetic artist and ends his life as a transported forger. In illustrating the route from mimetic vision in art to criminal forgery, Bulwer-Lytton

unequivocally points to forgery as an apposite metaphor for mimetic realism.

Wainewright the forger thus enabled Bulwer-Lytton to express the quasi-criminal nature of mimetic realism.

The failure of Bulwer-Lytton's artistic compromise

In creating a "life-like" Varney, Bulwer-Lytton had not, of course, committed this artistic crime himself. In an ingenious paradox, the "life-like" Varney intimates how mimesis is, nevertheless, a forgery-like mode of writing. Varney is an Idealist representation, warning of the criminal-like qualities of mimetic realism. Wainewright therefore gave *Lucretia* not only its realistic cautionary criminal (in the tradition of Wainewright's early biographers). He also gave *Lucretia* an Idealist disclaimer for its own use of mimesis (thus anticipating Wilde's use of Wainewright to embody an aesthetic). For those Victorian readers who could see only "appearances," *Lucretia* was essentially a realist novel; for those with poetic vision, it was a covert Idealist manifesto.

Though the character of Varney was uniquely brilliant in its design, there was little new about the fundamentals of Bulwer-Lytton's attempt to reconcile Idealism with realism in *Lucretia*. He had habitually been preoccupied with the question of how to marry transcendental Romantic aesthetics to the materialism of everyday Victorian life. King and Engel stress how Ernest, the eponymous hero of *Ernest Maltravers* (1837), "is able to temper his romantic vision with Victorian realism and to modify his romantic idealism with Victorian pragmatism" (292). And in "Raphael in Oxford Street: Bulwer's Accommodation to the Realists," Eigner charts a parallel manoeuvre.³² But the disastrous critical reception of *Lucretia*, and Bulwer-Lytton's

unashamedly realist defence of his novel, suggests that this latest negotiation of Idealism with realism was strained indeed. What was unusual in the case of *Lucretia*, perhaps, was the extent to which Bulwer-Lytton had failed in his artistic intentions.

Bulwer-Lytton's 1845 preface to his earlier crime novel, *Night and Morning* (1841), gives some idea of what he was aiming for in *Lucretia*:

In the Novel of 'Night and Morning' I have had various ends in view – subordinate, I grant, to the higher and more durable morality which belongs to the Ideal, and instructs us playfully while it interests, in the passions, and through the heart. (47-48)

In *Lucretia*, Bulwer-Lytton seems to have been trying to write a similar sort of novel: one that addressed the issue of criminality and moved the reader as a "Novel," while also remaining "subordinate" to "the Ideal." But Bulwer-Lytton could not, either in his preface of 1846 or other writings, say of *Lucretia* that which he had said so unequivocally of *Night and Morning*. In *Lucretia*, the hierarchy of representational modes that he had championed a year earlier in the preface to *Night and Morning* had effectively been reversed. The "Ideal" was markedly "subordinate" to mimetic realism, and Varney's forgeries were the site of this anxiety.

Bulwer-Lytton's private thoughts on the matter, expressed in a letter to G. H. Lewes and dated 24 December 1846, show the extent to which Bulwer-Lytton himself was thinking along these lines. Bulwer-Lytton and G. H. Lewes corresponded regularly and frankly with each other about their work in the 1840s.³³ Bulwer-Lytton told Lewes that he regretted that, in *Lucretia*, "a certain laborious [?] analysis involving much that was coarsely painful, and therefore in chief – inartistic – was necessary to prevent the peak in interest in the mere ability of the criminals. The crime ought to shock if it was to leave any lesson." In these remarks, Bulwer-Lytton seems to be acknowledging that, despite the ethical soundness of his motivation, his

“life-like” presentation of Varney was “inartistic.” In his choice of this adjective, Bulwer-Lytton confesses that *Lucretia* lacked the Idealist vision for which he consistently wished to be celebrated as a novelist. His realistic transcription of Wainewright into *Lucretia* was less artistic compromise than catastrophe.

2.2 The Rev. Dr. William Bailey and *The Forgery*: Forged Bills and Forged Words

While Wainewright focused *Lucretia*’s anxieties of form in terms of art and individual criminality, the Rev. Dr. William Bailey offered the early Victorian novel a forger who raised questions of social responsibility, ethical example and public morality. Bailey, a graduate of Trinity College, Dublin, was the minister of the Episcopal Chapel in Queen Square, Westminster. In 1843, aged thirty-six, he was convicted of forging a promissory note for £2,875, with the intention of defrauding the estate of Robert Smith. Made out to Miss Anne Bailey, Bailey’s sister, the promissory note also stood, on the second count, to defraud James Smith, the brother of the deceased.³⁴ Like Wainewright, Bailey was transported to Van Diemen’s Land (Woodall 161). Men of the cloth could sell their souls for money, too.

Bailey’s contagious immorality

Both *The Times* and W. C. Townsend’s *Modern State Trials* (1850) compared Bailey’s forgery case with that of another clergyman, Dr. William Dodd. Dodd’s forgery was occasioned by poverty and he was hanged for it in 1777.³⁵ What

distinguished Bailey's forgery, in the eyes of *The Times*, was his attempt to persuade four women and two men "to barter their souls" by swearing falsely to his version of events ("Criminal Trial" 2 Feb. 1843). For *The Times*, this behaviour constituted an "incredible atrocity" ("Conviction of Rev. Dr. Bailey"). Townsend deemed Dodd's crime "venial in comparison" (1: 406). The scandal of Bailey's case thus lay in the extreme wickedness of one so high in Victorian society's moral hierarchy. Officially entrusted by society to help prevent the plague of evil, this clergyman actually carried the disease himself. The trial of the Rev. Dr. William Bailey highlighted the contagious immorality of the forger.³⁶

Bailey's "shocking" crime, according to *The Times* leader, was facilitated both by the recent abolition of the death penalty for forgery and by Bailey's "superior abilities and education" ("Conviction"). Townsend found in Bailey's forgery an illustration of the "marked increase" in "crimes which require superior intelligence" (1: 404). The method by which Bailey obtained a sample of Robert Smith's handwriting did indeed illustrate Townsend's point. By pretending to the undertaker that he had heard that Smith "could not write his name," Bailey tricked him into handing over receipts written by Smith. Bailey said that he wished to show them "to his friends." In fact, he used them "for the purpose of effecting the forgery" ("Police: Rev. William Bailey," *The Times* 25 Nov. 1842). In the public mind, Bailey personified how intellect and a high degree of literacy, if misdirected by amoral desire and opportunism, could rot the moral fabric of society.

The Times quickly recognised the Bailey case as one of "vast importance" ("Police" 9 Dec. 1842). In its review of William Otter Woodall's *Collection of Reports of Celebrated Trials, Civil and Criminal*, the *Athenaeum* judged: "Bailey's case is the most fortunate of Mr. Woodall's selections; for whilst it presents several

points that deserve consideration, it has slipped from the general memory” (85). This was in 1874. The comment implies that twenty-five or more years earlier, Bailey’s case would still have been firmly lodged in the public memory. Authors and their readerships around that time would probably have been able to recall the Bailey case with little prompting. Woodall’s narrative also points to the possibility that two generations of Victorians could view the same forger in rather different terms. To Woodall, Bailey was a proto-sensation villain, “a fashionable preacher of some celebrity” (1: 148). But the literary culture of the early and mid-1840s was far more taken with the ethical issues raised by Bailey.

G. P. R. James and forgery

One of the most popular authors around this time was G. P. R. James (1799-1860). Nowadays known (if he is at all) for writing somewhere between sixty-seven and up to one hundred fourth-rate novels, James led a life in many respects as colourful as his fiction. Initially, he lived the life of a London Regency dandy, but he travelled extensively and read widely. Interested in history and personally encouraged by Sir Walter Scott, he began to write historical romances in 1825. His most successful titles included *The Gypsy* (1835), *Attila* (1837), *Agincourt* (1844), *Arabella Stuart* (1844), *The Smuggler* (1845) and *Henry Smeaton* (1851). Between 1844 and 1849, Smith and Elder collected and published his novels, with revisions, prefaces and dedications, in twenty-one volumes. In addition to making his mark as an extraordinarily prolific writer of fiction, James wrote and edited several historical works, ranging from *Memoirs of Great Commanders* (1832) and *Lives of Eminent Foreign Statesmen* (1838-40), to his *Life of Richard I* (1842-49). As historiographer to William IV, he wrote pamphlets on the United States, Germany, and the Corn Laws. Although he

made a great deal of money from his writings, James was forced to flee England for America to escape his creditors in 1850. Two years later, however, he was made British consul for Virginia, becoming Consul-General at Venice in 1857, where – still writing novels – he died three years later.³⁷

Between 1848 and 1849, G. P. R. James was fascinated by forgery of various kinds, all of which were unmistakably related to ideas of fiction. In 1848, he published a novel about real-life forgery, *Gowrie; or the King's Plot*, a romance set in the Scotland of James VI. In October of that year, he wrote to Charles Ollier, the reader of the publisher Henry Colburn, of his intention to defend this novel against the *Examiner's* charge that its historical basis was unsound. S. M. Ellis reprints these letters and explains how James's ensuing pamphlet sought to prove that Sprott's forgeries enabled James VI of Scots to get away with murder (114-16). Entitled *An Investigation of the Circumstances attending the Murder of John Earl of Gowrie and Alexander Ruthven, By order of King James the Sixth of Scotland, With an examination of the forged Restalrig letters brought forward to exculpate the king* (1849), the pamphlet discloses how G. P. R. James's mind evidently connected forgery with fiction around 1848-49: "I cannot entertain the slightest doubt whatsoever, that these letters were forged, and that Sprott's whole story, to use the archbishop's words, was a 'mere fiction'" (xii). In 1849, James also published his edition of *Rizzio; or, Scenes in Europe during the Sixteenth Century by the Late Mr. Ireland*, the supposed autobiography of David Rizzio, secretary to Mary Queen of Scots. William Henry Ireland (1777-1835) was a teenage literary forger who had achieved notoriety for faking two plays and other materials by "Shakspeare."³⁸ Though James disapproved of Ireland's forgeries, he saw them as the forbidden fruits of a precocious literary talent (Preface 1-25).

The Forgery was published in December 1848.³⁹ The *Athenaeum* began its review of the novel with the words, “This is not a historical novel.” Indeed, it was strikingly unusual for a G. P. R. James novel to be set mainly in modern London. Up to 1848, G. P. R. James’s literary reputation rested on an output of historical romances so prodigious, so predictable in subject matter and style, that Thackeray could comfortably burlesque them in *Novels By Eminent Hands* (1847). *Barbazure* by “G. P. R. Jeames Esq., etc.” begins:

It was upon one of those balmy evenings of November which are only known in the valleys of Languedoc and among the mountains of Alsace, that two cavaliers might have been perceived by the naked eye threading one of the rocky and romantic gorges that skirt the mountain-land between the Marne and the Garonne. (47)

Thackeray was not the first to make this criticism. Archibald Alison, for example, had written in 1845 that James’s descriptions of two horsemen “rapidly pall by repetition, and at length become tedious or ridiculous” (80). Prior to the publication of *The Forgery*, G. P. R. James’s readers knew what to expect from a James novel: a hackneyed tale involving dashing horsemen of long ago.

There could be a number of explanations for James’s shift in artistic direction in *The Forgery*. S. M. Ellis was convinced that James took *Barbazure* “to heart” and subsequently tried to avoid the features it satirised (257). Certainly, the epistolary verse drama that G. P. R. James wrote from New York in 1850 corroborates this theory to some extent. Addressed to the memoirist Maunsell B. Field, it contains the couplet, “C.: ‘Here’s Mr. Thackeray.’ / G. P. R.: ‘He rhymes to quackery’” (qtd. in S. M. Ellis 128). James’s rhyme, we may infer, expresses his opinion that Thackeray’s knowledge about novel writing was bogus. Though apparently immune to critical opinion, James might well have found mockery by a famous fellow author hurtful.⁴⁰ But there was also, perhaps, a typically pragmatic motive behind James’s artistic re-

orientation. As G. H. Lewes's essay, "Historical Romance" (1846) illustrates, by the mid 1840s the historical romance was critically derided (Tillotson 140-41). Indeed, the latest successful novels dealt with pressing socio-economic concerns: Thackeray's *Vanity Fair* (1846-48), Dickens's *Dombey and Son* (1846-48), Disraeli's *Tancred* (1847), and Elizabeth Gaskell's *Mary Barton* (1848). Furthermore, James had just separated from his longstanding publishers, Smith and Elder (S. M. Ellis 120 and n.1). For *The Forgery*, James was in the harness of Thomas Cautley Newby, whom Sutherland tells us was "a hand-to-mouth purveyor of low quality fiction and a man of dubious honesty" (*Victorian Novelists and Publishers* 45). It is likely that, together, these changes in circumstance led G. P. R. James to look to a relatively modern subject in 1848.

Bailey and *The Forgery*

What could have been more suitable for James's literary purposes, and more congenial to James at this time, than another, recent, well known, real-life forgery? The details of *The Forgery*'s plot cumulatively connect the novel to the Bailey case. They do so chiefly around ideas of family, ethical responsibility and business. Whereas the Rev. Dr. William Bailey is a symbolic father, a clergyman, Stephen Hayley is a literal one.⁴¹ In *The Forgery*, Stephen Hayley, a merchant, forges an acceptance on a bill of exchange.⁴² He then emotionally blackmails his son, Henry, into fleeing the country as though he, the son, had committed the crime (1: 71-88). In both stories, the father figure, whose explicit duty it is to guide those in his pastoral care, morally corrupts those around him. Deliberately, he makes them accomplices to his crime and exposes them to the law's punishment. And yet, both Bailey and Hayley

display ambivalence about aspects of their immorality. Although Hayley deceives his son into delivering the forged bill to the bank, he also writes an exculpatory letter for his son to show to the authorities if he is caught (1: 89). Bailey had, it seems, similarly used his (perhaps unwitting) sister as an accomplice in his forgery. But, perhaps to safeguard her from being officially implicated, or from committing perjury, Bailey did not use her as a witness in his defence, even though, as the judge remarked, her evidence in court could have proved his innocence (“Criminal Trials: Rev. William Bailey,” *The Times* 2 Feb. 1843).

There are other similarities, too. Both forgeries are committed on merchants, investigated by the Bow-street police station, and involve documents – in addition to the forgeries – on which the fate of the accused depends (*The Forgery* 1: 91; “Police,” *The Times* 25 Nov. 1842). Just as Bailey’s forgery was designed to defraud a “wealthy miser” (“Police,” *The Times* 25 Nov. 1842), so the victim of forgery in G. P. R. James’s novel is the wealthy and money-obsessed merchant, Henry Scriven. In both stories, proof of the alleged forger’s innocence or guilt partly hangs upon a memorandum-book. Whereas Bailey’s “papers,” seized by the police, reveal what one of Bailey’s suborned witnesses “was to have sworn at the trial” (“Police,” *The Times* 2 Dec. 1842), Hayley’s son’s “paper,” taken by a blackmailer, is his father’s confession of guilt (2: 163-73).

Some of these repetitions and distortions of the Bailey case might be coincidences. Fiction often absorbs reality unawares. But a statement made by one of Bailey’s untrustworthy witnesses clinches the connection. Sarah Burberry told the court: “Mr. Smith told me that Dr. Bailey was the son of his oldest and most respected friend” (“Criminal Trial,” *The Times* 2 Feb. 1843). In *The Forgery*, Hayley senior and Scriven were once close friends and it is the son, like Bailey, who is

accused of committing an act of forgery on his father's old friend. It is this configuration of father, son and forgery, perhaps encouraged by a *Times* report of the conviction of a father and his sons for forgery on 16 August 1847 ("Police: John Ford"), that focuses *The Forgery's* use of the Bailey trial. Whereas the fact of Wainewright's influence on *Lucretia* is strikingly obvious, Bailey's influence on *The Forgery* is distant, subtle and diffuse. Bailey reverberates throughout the text like a lightly-sounded bass note, helping to form a range of self-referential chords: forgery's role in theories of realism; the early Victorian novel's relation to *Robinson Crusoe*; the idea of words as money and of novels as commodities; and the viability of natural history as a future model for realist representation.

Forgery's place in theories of realism in the 1840s and early 1850s

Fathers, sons, and the "cleverness" of forgers, were precisely the terms in which mid-nineteenth century writers often spoke about the history of the novel. In 1845, John Forster called Defoe "the father of the illustrious family of the English novel" (Rev. of Defoe's *Works* 531). In 1842, George Moir, a prominent Scottish lawyer and literary critic, identified Defoe's "peculiar genius" as being for "forging, as it were, the handwriting of nature herself, with a dexterity which defied detection" (43).⁴³ Moir's analogy had already been employed by Thomas De Quincey a year earlier: "De Foe is the only author known who has so plausibly circumstantiated his false historical records as to make them pass for genuine, even with literary men and critics." De Quincey continues in similar vein: "In his *Memoirs of a Cavalier*, one of his poorest forgeries [...]" (117). According to George Borrow in 1851, Defoe's best forgery, *Robinson Crusoe*, "exerted over the minds of Englishmen an influence certainly greater than any other [book] of modern times, which has been in most

people's hands, [...] [and it is] a book from which the most luxuriant and fertile of our modern prose writers have drunk inspiration" (*Lavengro* 19). This early Victorian "fascination" with *Robinson Crusoe*, said Forster, sprang specifically from the novel's "Reality" (Rev. of Defoe's *Works* 530). Early Victorians saw *Robinson Crusoe* not only as a celebrated forgery of reality, but also as an important measure of the contemporary novel's verisimilitude.

Whether the realist novel copied nature (expertly, like a scrivener) or forged nature (copied it, that is, with some of the deceitfulness associated with the forger) is the central question framed by Herman Melville's novella, *Bartleby, The Scrivener* (1853). Melville's views are relevant here, for his romances *Typee* (1846) *Omoo* (1847) and *Redburn* (1849) are contemporaneous with *The Forgery*. Melville was one of G. P. R. James's minor literary competitors in England in the late 1840s. *Bartleby* is essentially the story of a New York scrivener who refuses to "verify the accuracy of his copy" (10). As Leo Marx discusses, *Bartleby's* plot can be related to Melville's unwillingness, at this time, to write novels that were accurate copies of "human relations as they are conceived in [Wall Street]" (244).⁴⁴ But Bartleby, scrivener, is also mistaken for a forger (32-33).⁴⁵ In *Bartleby*, Melville intimated that a slavishly realist representation of a financially driven America was *not only* mechanical and dehumanising, but *almost* akin to forgery. Whereas De Quincey and Moir saw in Defoe's realism an impressive type of forgery, Melville appears to have abhorred this idea of fiction (for himself, at least). This general debate in the 1840s and 1850s about whether literary realism, of whichever kind, is properly analogous to copying or forgery – and, if the latter, whether it is to be regarded positively or negatively – is the major theoretical context for *The Forgery's* relation to realism.

In early Victorian literary culture, the notion of some consensually verifiable reality was widely shared. Quite naturally, this pragmatic assumption informed the critical reception of *The Forgery*. Although the *Athenaeum* duly registered the romantic and sentimental qualities of *The Forgery*, it judged that the characterisation of Scriven made G. P. R. James's novel "more true to nature [...] than Mr. Dicken[s]'s *Dombey and Son*]." G. P. R. James's customary "grandiloquence and artificiality" (*DNB*) clearly set the realist elements of his novel in relief. The *Athenaeum*'s praise would have pleased James. His novels, he liked to think, offered "true and faithful representations of society in all ages," and displayed, "accurate portraiture of character and manners" ("General Preface" xiii). For G. P. R. James, good novel writing was similar to expert copying.

G. P. R. James's ethical concerns were centred on his novels' effects on his readers. A James novel aimed, he said, at "combining amusement with moral instruction" ("General Preface" xii). But, as we have seen with *Lucretia*, in the Victorian literary culture of the 1840s, ethical considerations could not only apply to the message of a novel, but also to its medium. The Bailey forgery case had trickled into the details of James's plot and raised concerns about society's traditional figures of moral guardianship, explicitly, fathers. So what did this forgery plot suggest about *The Forgery*'s relation to its own progenitor, *Robinson Crusoe*? Was *The Forgery* indeed "true to nature," a faithful copyist? Or was it, like Defoe's novel, a forgery of "the handwriting of nature"? Were *The Forgery*'s textual representations, in other words, any more ethical than Bailey's forgeries?

The Forgery and the Defovian exchange system

From the perspective of Harold Bloom's account of the relations between authors,⁴⁶ G. P. R. James's filial anxieties about Defoe's tremendous literary prestige would manifest themselves in the textual reflexes of *The Forgery*. Certainly, one of James's characters, Lady Ann Mellent compares herself to one of Defoe's sources, Alexander Selkirk. In response to each "fresh want," she struggles to make "lists" of provisions for the "remote" Milford Castle; for there, as on Crusoe's island, "pen and ink were not very easily procured" (3: 134, 40, 37). Defoe's castaway's basic needs are ironically rewritten as minimal aristocratic expectation. Alternatively, Charles Marston's Grand Tour clutter – "things of bronze, and marble, and alabaster, and painted canvas, and carved oak [...] Albanian dresses, Syrian carpets, turbans, caps, sabres, yataghans [...] strange looking commodities" (2: 197) – translates Crusoe's mercantile inventories into a private collection of ethnographical trophies. In Lady Mellent and Marston, Defoe's *homo economicus* is lampooned.⁴⁷

This antagonistic revision of *Robinson Crusoe* is typical of *The Forgery*. Through his euphemistic description as "Marine Store Dealer," the fence Mingy Bowes parodies Crusoe's scavenger-like socio-economic status in the early parts of *Robinson Crusoe* (3: 88-89). There is also Colonel Middleton's servant, Carlo Carlini, once "a ragged boy, without shoes, stockings, jacket or hat" (2: 325-26), and now a "pedlar [...] of wares, religious, political, moral, philosophical" (2: 319). While recalling Man Friday's apparent elevation into civilisation, Carlini also discloses the cynicism behind Crusoe's totally mercantile mindset. The metaphor describing Henry Scriven's emotional imperviousness originates in Crusoe's description of his island stockade: "His fortress was small, and therefore easily defended" (1: 22). Winkworth

is marooned at his desk by “the ocean of old [business] papers” (3: 110). In such references and images as these, G. P. R. James’s own story of merchants is alive to the way in which Defoe’s “Reality” is emphatically the product of a mercantile society.⁴⁸

The literary and financial cultures of the eighteenth century were principally connected by credit, which James Thompson defines as “the essence of symbolic exchange, allowing one to trade not with things but with potential, on words, on a promise” (130). In Thompson’s account, credit is neither material, nor necessarily fixed, nor guaranteed in value. Its inherent instability perpetually threatened the existence of the eighteenth-century merchant’s individualised, solid and possession-defined world. But Defoe’s novel does not only conceive of the *world* that it portrays in these terms. The precariousness of the credit system also threatened the trustworthiness of its *words*. As Sandra Sherman’s explains, “Defoe’s texts instantiate the homology between financial credit and literary credibility, and engage both the discourse of emerging capitalism and the theory and practice of fiction” (8). *Robinson Crusoe*’s words are credit notes. Defoe’s novel’s substantives – specifically, his characteristic inventories of goods – are textual “promise[s]” of an empirically verifiable material reality that will, at least in theory, guarantee the printed designation of those “promise[s].” The word “log” in *Robinson Crusoe*, for example, asks us to accept that a real-life log guarantees its value. Credit was an inescapable condition of existence not only for eighteenth-century merchants, but also for the embryonic novel (Thompson 40-86).

Although the idea that money and words circulate within a similar metaphorical system originates in Plato (Shell 131-33), the trade-stimulated growth of a paper economy in the eighteenth century meant that, by the 1840s, it was commonly

assumed to be so. To judge from his choice of similes, G. P. R. James knew very well of this connection between money and language. Scriven, the merchant, is “as economical of his words as of his money” (2: 124). This essentially financial conception of the novel’s system for representing “Reality,” therefore, was *The Forgery*’s ontological inheritance.⁴⁹ In engaging with *Robinson Crusoe*, *The Forgery* confronted the genesis of its genre.

Money, words, and *The Forgery*’s forged bill

The Victorians were beset with alarming breakdowns in their growing systems of financial exchange. In *The Key to the London Money Market* (1872), Arthur Crump dismissed the Victorian paper money system as “an entire mistake” (9). The root of the problem, he argued, was that private and joint-stock banks could lend money *and* issue notes. Few of these banks possessed at any one time enough gold or silver reserves to honour their promises to the bearers of the notes they issued (9-11). (Only the Bank of England was required by law to secure its notes [11].) 1847, in Crump’s view, “stands out in melancholy prominence on account of the commercial discredit and the mercantile and banking failures for which it is notorious” (28).⁵⁰ The chief cause of these banking disasters, he notes, was rampant speculation on railway investment (6). Victorians at this time had good reason to doubt whether the reality promised by paper currency (i.e. a quantity of gold or silver) actually existed. Few, it seems likely, had much faith in the currency system.

One of the most dramatic failures in this system during the 1840s was the Exchequer Bills Forgeries of 1841-42. The case showed how even bills made and issued under the auspices of the government could not be trusted. A clerk of the

Exchequer-bill office, E. B. Smith, had used Government materials to manufacture spurious bills. In all respects apart from the forged signatures, the bills appeared genuine. Even the Bank of England had accepted them. When it was discovered that the signatures did not correspond to the counterfoils, the legal status of the bills was hotly disputed, with many of those left holding the bills likely to bear the loss. The Royal Commission Report of 1842 concluded that Smith's forged bills were indeed forgeries.⁵¹

Such was the background informing G. P. R. James's own representation of a forged bill. It is surely significant that James's confrontation with *Robinson Crusoe* occurs in a novel built around the forgery of a bill of exchange.⁵² When a forged bill like Stephen Hayley's successfully bluffs its way into a bank, it demonstrates how a genuine bill is accepted at face value alone. Ultimately, a genuine bill is a promise of gold or silver authorised by government. So long as the bill looks and feels right, society accepts this promise on trust (regardless of whether individuals believe in the literalness of this promise). Hayley's forgery dramatically exposes credit's intrinsic untrustworthiness, a notion with which G. P. R. James's readers would have been all too familiar.

Through its depiction of a forged bill, *The Forgery* gestures towards a parallel crisis in the Defovian exchange system. *Robinson Crusoe* had asked its readers to trust that a reality guaranteed its representations. Although no such guarantee might have been possible, there is little suggestion of any doubt about this in *Robinson Crusoe*'s representations of money.⁵³ *The Forgery* is very different in this respect. In constructing a story around a forged bill, *The Forgery* foregrounds an instance of a credit note that is *unquestionably* null and void. In describing how Stephen Hayley does not want his forged bill "to get into circulation" (1: 71-72), moreover, *The*

Forgery obtrusively connects his forgery to the cultural circulation of novels. To Victorians, the word “circulation” brought to mind ideas of libraries, books, and readers.⁵⁴ G. P. R. James, almost all of whose novels were published in book form,⁵⁵ could hardly have used this word without being aware of its bibliographical meaning.⁵⁶ *The Forgery* thus revised the Defovian exchange system in terms of forgery.⁵⁷

As an extreme manifestation of the spurious credit note, *The Forgery*’s forged bill highlighted the ethical problem arising from the Victorian novel’s inherited association with the eighteenth-century financial model of “symbolic exchange.” De Quincey, Moir, and Melville had all expressed the view that realism could be regarded as a kind of forgery. To this debate, *The Forgery* made a carefully formulated contribution. It asked: should novels deemed “true to nature” more properly be figured as potential forgers, who might be trying to circulate – among their readers - words that fraudulently promised a reality that could not, in all likelihood, guarantee those words? Whereas *Robinson Crusoe* conceived of a novel’s words monetarily (as credit notes), early Victorian models of literary realism emphasised their calligraphic quality (realism forged “the handwriting of nature”). *The Forgery* bridged both these forgery-based conceptualisations of realism. As one might expect from a text written by G. P. R. James, *The Forgery* brought a markedly historical perspective to forgery’s relation to the Victorian novel.

G. P. R. James, *The Forgery*, and the commodification of the novel

The Forgery’s anxious response to its being implicated in a mercantile model of exchange might appear rather incongruous, given G. P. R. James’s current reputation as “a one-man fiction factory” (Sutherland, “The First Four Emmas”). James’s

approach to his profession appears to have been mercantile in the extreme. S. M. Ellis estimates that James “usually received £500 or more for each of his romances” (261), and notes that James churned these out with such unbecoming frequency that Smith and Elder asked him to limit his output (120 n.1). In the early 1840s, James had been instrumental in securing copyright legislation (S. M. Ellis 100-02). On 26 October 1844, W. Harrison Ainsworth had written to James how he “used to be filled with wonder at [James’s] extraordinary fertility of production [...] the inexhaustible stores of fancy, experience, and reading [...]” (rpt. in S. M. Ellis 102). How could one *not* conclude that G. P. R. James saw his novels as quickly dashed-off products whose market value was to be inflated and zealously protected?

Always short of money, G. P. R. James perhaps had to see his novels thus. He was in good company. Michael Lund suggests that, as part of their bid for greater economic recognition at this time, Victorian authors were compelled to associate their novels publicly with the idea of “Property.” By the middle of the nineteenth century, Lund argues, novel writing had become popularly identified with ““Production”” (“Novels, Writers, and Readers” 19-21). By way of example, he points out that in *Pendennis* (1850) Thackeray even compares the author’s desk to ““a merchant’s desk”” (ibid. 21). The conceptualisation of authorship as a business dominated the novel at mid-century, and confined the genre to the status of a commodity. G. P. R. James was therefore under considerable external pressure to conceive of his novels as, in themselves, parts of a massive commercial system of exchange.⁵⁸

But there is slight mismatch, I think, between the general critical perception of G. P. R. James’s view of novel writing and the one he actually articulated in *The Forgery*. At one point in the story, the narrator reflects that he would choose “the silk-worm, who spins golden threads for the benefit of others,” as the “emblem of the

English literary man” (2: 240). Although this image confirms Ainsworth’s conception of James’s writing as a type of “production,” it primarily emphasises the organic, beautiful, and altruistic qualities of literary creativity. Here, G. P. R. James intimates that novels are not only luxury goods: they are spun from the artist’s own being, made out of the imaginative material given to him by God to enable him to thrive, but which commerce – perhaps personified in James’s mind by his ill-reputed new publisher, Newby - has exploited for others’ enjoyment and for its own profit.⁵⁹ This narrative antipathy towards a wholly *mercantile* conceptualisation of the novel points towards an alternative. Was *The Forgery*’s critique of the Defovian exchange model - by re-aligning it with forgery - only a preliminary step on the road to a larger goal: Victorian fiction’s partial release from the grip of the business mindset?

Between Defoe and George Eliot: the importance of *The Forgery* in the history of literary realisms

G. P. R. James evidently had deep reservations about commerce. Witness the counterblast to Scriven’s mercantile sensibilities given by Henry Hayley (the son falsely accused of forgery): ““Silk, cotton, molasses, iron-ware, broad-cloth, machinery, corn, wine, and oil, are not the only things to be considered in life, it seems to me [...] There are moral as well as material goods”” (2: 122-23). In sympathy with this opinion, the narrator suggests that a worthwhile project for the Victorian novel would be “to take the accurate history of any five square miles [...] and examine with a microscope, the acts and deeds, the circumstances, the accidents, and the fate of the people upon it” (1: 168). The narrative practice frequently champions this perspective, too. Scriven is, “as a naturalist would say, the most

perfect specimen ever found” of the mercantile disposition (1: 306-07). On several occasions, *The Forgery* entertains the notion of the novelist as natural historian.

In “The Natural History of German Life” (1856), George Eliot defined natural history as the “conception of European society as incarnate history” (129). She recommended that Victorian novelists should embrace Wilhelm von Riehl’s emphasis on scientific observation. The novel, she believed, should show “knowledge of society in its details” (130). In Sally Shuttleworth’s opinion, however, Eliot’s own attempt to achieve this - in *Adam Bede* (1859) - led to a predominantly static portrayal of human society (24-50). Through its imagery, *The Forgery* admits of a similar problem.

Charles Marston humorously presents Winkworth “as an extraordinary and almost unique specimen of the fossil man, or the only instance, in Europe, of the living mummy” (1: 146-47). Lady Mellent similarly remarks that she “feel[s] as if [she] were a stuffed chamelon [*sic*] in a glass case” (3: 226). A potent symbol of change thwarted, the taxidermy reference suggests that the natural historian’s eye kills its objects for display. As a methodology that would liberate Victorian fiction from models of finance and commerce, natural history seemed a dead end to *The Forgery*.

Nevertheless, in the history of realisms, *The Forgery* is a pivotal novel. It explored how the Defovian financial model damned any realist novel to the status of a forgery of reality. Most importantly, it anticipated George Eliot’s use of natural history in *Adam Bede*.⁶⁰ According to Eliot, realism in fiction was to be modelled on the scientific vision of Dutch painting.⁶¹ (She gives no place in her conception of the writing process to metaphors of finance, credit, or commerce.) For Victorians, *Adam Bede* was the model for realism that perhaps most spectacularly displaced *Robinson Crusoe*. *The Forgery* is thus an important point of transition from one major model of realist representation to another. Although its narrator takes “a microscopic view of

some half dozen human hearts” (1: 169), his motive for this natural historicism is to “find strange romances enough going on to stock a library” (1: 168). Reproduced here is the inherited mercantile vocabulary of *Robinson Crusoe*: “find,” “enough” and “stock.” Although it displays no sense of the moral mission that drove *Adam Bede*’s experiment in natural history, *The Forgery* valiantly pitted itself against the legacy of Defoe’s amoral and mercantile brand of realism.⁶² *The Forgery*’s approach to forgery, finance and fiction was shaped by general cultural doubts about the financial exchange system of the 1840s. But it was also informed by an ethical consciousness, one stimulated by the case of the Rev. Dr. William Bailey.

2.3 Bailey, *Ruth*, and the Reality of Deceit

The Forgery was not the only Victorian novel influenced by the ethical dimension of the Bailey case. Elizabeth Gaskell gathered some of her material for *Ruth* (1853) in 1850-52 (Shelston vii-x). One possible source has been overlooked, however. In the April 1851 issue of *Blackwood’s Edinburgh Magazine*, Samuel Warren anonymously reviewed, at some length, W. C. Townsend’s account of Bailey’s forgery. In Warren’s review, Bailey is characterised as “an attractive preacher, and [one] highly respected by his congregation” (463). Bailey managed to trick his witnesses because they were “conscientiously deposed to his eminence as a preacher” (464). He capitalized on “the estimation in which he was held as a man of moral worth” (ibid.). Warren also mentioned Bailey’s sister as a possible accomplice. “It were vain,” Warren concluded,

“to speculate on the state of mind and of feeling of an accepted and successful minister of religion, who could conceive, and proceed deliberately to carry into execution, as he did, the idea of such enormous atrocity!” (ibid.). Warren’s review thus emphasises how dumbfounded he is at the idea of a clergyman’s deceit. As Gaskell had published in *Blackwood’s*,⁶³ it is hard to believe that she was not a fairly regular reader of the magazine.

Bailey and Ruth

In the character of Thurston Benson, a Dissenting minister, Gaskell does indeed “speculate” on what could lead a gifted and respected clergyman to lie.⁶⁴ Benson’s “deceit,” however, is to trick his local community into believing that Ruth is a widow rather than an unmarried mother. We follow Benson into “whole labyrinths of social ethics” (117). In contrast to Bailey, his “deception grieved him” (147) and, when forced to consider one of its consequences, he admits that his “deceit was wrong and faithless” (349). Benson’s severest critic in the community, the powerful businessman Mr. Bradshaw, echoes the view of Bailey expressed by Warren in *Blackwood’s*: “how dared you come into this house, where you were looked upon as a minister of religion, with a lie in your mouth?” (ibid.). Like Bailey, Benson corrupts the innocent. His sister, Faith, is his accomplice (as Bailey’s sister appears to have been his), confessing that she “enjoy[s] not being fettered by truth” (150). The crime of forgery, however, is committed against Benson, by Mr. Bradshaw’s son. Gaskell, it seems, channelled the notion of a deceitful clergyman into Thurston Benson, and his forgery into that committed by the clerk, Dick Bradshaw.⁶⁵

The credibility of a clergyman's lie

Recent critics have generally viewed Benson's "deceit" (325) in terms of the discourse of the fallen woman.⁶⁶ Contemporary critics, however, were chiefly concerned with the probability of Benson's lie. As John Forster remarked in his review of *Ruth*, "the question of art remains whether ["the fraud"] is one that such a man ["the poor clergyman"] would be likely to commit" (222). Forster, writing in the *Examiner*, concluded: "it is" (ibid.). But elements of the religious press were less convinced. Although the *Nonconformist* was generally supportive of Gaskell's portrayal of Benson's "falsehood," it made the concession that, "the possibility of the thing is alone in question" (228). In other words, Benson's "deceit" was convincing artistically and morally, but was it really possible in real life? The Evangelical Anglican *English Review* thought not, judging it very unlikely that Benson "would yield as easily as he is represented as doing to the practice of a deception" (254). The *Prospective Review*, a Christian quarterly, declared that its "objection to the deception rest[ed] on artistic grounds, as untrue to the conception of Mr. Benson's character" (291). It was, in the eyes of the anonymous reviewer, "a falsehood [...] impossible [...] [for] Mr. Benson [...] who is represented from the first as a religious man" (ibid.). Understandably, the *English Review* and the *Prospective Review* were simply reassuring their readerships that their own religious ministers do not and could not behave in such a fraudulent manner.⁶⁷

In its depiction of a clergyman's lie, *Ruth* provocatively connects realism with morality. As contemporary reviews suggest, the implications of this connection constitute one of the central concerns of Gaskell's novel. Recent criticism has certainly not ignored the issue. Jane Spencer, for example, senses in Faith's "talent

for fiction,”” Gaskell’s own “uneasiness about the morality of fiction-making” (54-55). Spencer is referring to Gaskell’s anxiety about how realism, like Faith, may end up lying in order “to do good” (Spencer 55). In trying to show how the problem of unmarried mothers must be addressed honestly and openly by society, Gaskell had indeed, perhaps, misrepresented a Dissenting minister’s likely moral conduct.⁶⁸

Lies and forgery

But Faith is not the chief site for this anxiety. As many contemporary commentators decried, Benson is the originator of, and validating authority for, the fraudulent representation of Ruth as a widowed mother. His ““rejoic[ing] in th[e illegitimate] child’s advent”” (118) actually leads Faith to exclaim, ““May God forgive you, Thurston!”” (ibid.). According to Faith’s instinctive moral sensibilities, Benson’s remark that Ruth’s ““sin appears to [him] to be quite distinct from its consequences”” can be squared with their consciences only by ““Sophistry”” (119). It is Benson who prepares the ethical ground for their collaborative “deceit” and, when it flowers, he waters it with his tacit ministerial approval.

Ruth aligns Benson’s “deceit” with its portrayal of forgery. Dick Bradshaw works as a clerk in his father’s business, which looks after Benson’s shares. The young Dick, whose wild London habits have exhausted his funds, forges Benson’s signature, sells Benson’s shares, and steals his money. The forgery comes to light when Benson, not long after the exposure of his own “deceit,” inquires about his dividends and learns that his shares have been sold. Kate Flint sees Dick’s forgery as part of a redeeming context for Benson’s “excusable mendacity” (25). But, in insisting on a comparative ethical evaluation of Benson’s “deceit,” Gaskell’s text also suggests that the clergyman’s lie is in some way related to forgery. From a legal

perspective, this textual movement is perfectly logical. At Victorian common law, a forgery consisted in “a making *malo animo* of any written instrument, for the purpose of fraud or deceit” (qtd. in Fitzjames Stephen, *A General View* 141).

Benson’s “deceit” is almost a substitute for forgery. He decides on passing Ruth off as a widow chiefly because he remembers that Thomas Wilkins, after having seen evidence of his illegitimacy “in the baptismal registry” (122), had committed suicide. The law-abiding Benson would, of course, never forge the parish register.⁶⁹ But he does the next best thing in creating “a false state of widowhood” (348) for Ruth. That the text conceives of forgery in terms of personification is later confirmed. On being apprised of his son’s crime, Mr. Bradshaw is unable to speak “the bare naked word” (401): forgery. Mrs. Denbigh (Ruth) is Benson’s forgery.⁷⁰

But while Dick’s felonious forgery is not subjected to legal discourse in *Ruth*, Benson’s metaphorical forgery is. The narrator uses juridical vocabulary to describe Sally and Jemima’s suspicions about Ruth’s marital status: “judge-like severity of demeanour” (144), “evidence” (326), and “a severe judge” (328). After Ruth’s “detection” (376), Mr. Bradshaw threatens her with the police if she ever returns to the Bradshaws’ home. In many places, the text treats Benson’s figurative forgery as though it were a felonious forgery.

The consequences of Benson’s “deceit” are dire. Once discovered, Benson’s lie is shown to cause social, psychological and spiritual chaos. Ruth is cast out of the Bradshaw home; she loses her close friend Jemima and her position as governess. She feels, perhaps for reasons practical as well as spiritual, that she has no option but to take a suicidal job (that no one else will take) in the typhoid-ridden hospital. Her self-sacrifice to others ultimately may save her soul, but, as Charlotte Brontë wrote to Gaskell, “Why should she die?” Benson himself ends the novel a broken man. In his

own eyes and those of much of his community, he has failed as a spiritual leader. (He has even drawn out his own sister's latent propensity for lying.)

And yet the novel is surprisingly lenient on its layman forger. Dick would, in the normal course of events, certainly have been prosecuted, imprisoned and, like Varney, forced to endure the rigours of hard labour (though probably in England by this time).⁷¹ But, after Benson has removed law from the moral equation, forgery emerges in *Ruth* as a positive social force. Dick's forgery is the spur to his moral regeneration. Even Mr. Bradshaw experiences a moral reformation, learning humility and humanity largely as a result of Benson's forgiveness of the forgery. Dick's forgery also provides Benson with an opportunity to expiate *his* sin. He deceived the Bradshaws into taking Ruth, his forgery, into their home. Not only does Benson pay, financially, for his metaphorical forgery of Ruth. Dick's forgery also enables him to offer the example of forgiveness that he seeks, for his forgery (Ruth the widow), from Mr. Bradshaw. The effects of Dick's forgery are remarkably beneficial for all concerned. A layman's textual forgery is finally presented by the text as far less damaging, for both society and the individual, than the clergyman's lie.⁷²

***Ruth* and forgery**

This textual position points to *Ruth*'s argument for its moral value. Although *Ruth* might misrepresent a real-life Dissenting minister's moral identity (rather as Dick Bradshaw forges Benson's name on paper), it might also operate rather like Dick's forgery. *Ruth*'s misrepresentation might bring about social good: the amelioration of society's treatment of unmarried mothers. A clergyman's lie, on the other hand, is shown in *Ruth* to wreak havoc in society (even if undertaken for the best of motives,

as Benson's definitely is). By paralleling Dick's forgery and Benson's lie, *Ruth* advances its own superior moral effects in mitigation of its suspect methodology. If misrepresenting how a real-life Dissenting minister would behave can change society's perception of unmarried mothers, the argument goes, this sort of forgery on paper is infinitely more acceptable than a well-meaning clergyman's lie.

But the parallels also point to *Ruth*'s anxiety about its moral status. In creating a possibly forged *character*, is Gaskell actually closer to Benson than Dick? Although the character of Benson is, like Dick's forgery, created with pen and paper, how dissimilar is *Ruth*'s audience to Benson's congregation? To what extent is the novelist who addresses social issues a recognised moral voice? By some contemporary commentators, preacher and novelist were deemed to have much in common.⁷³ Although the *Prospective Review* opined, "We are far from maintaining that the novelist should usurp the function of the preacher" (90), it did comment upon "her influence as a moral teacher" (91). These concerns haunt the spaces between the two forgery plots. For *Ruth*, forgery functioned as a self-reflexive metaphor. Within this metaphor, Gaskell's novel could agonise about the moral and artistic validity of its representation of a Dissenting minister. Here, Bailey forced Victorian fiction to agonise over the ethics of its realism in terms of ends and means.

2.4 Thomas Powell and *David Copperfield*: Forging Time

For Bulwer-Lytton, G. P. R. James and Elizabeth Gaskell, real-life forgers posed *fundamental* questions about a novel's relation to some notion of an exterior reality.

How could reality be most authentically represented by fiction? Which is the most appropriate model for how a novel depicts its version of reality? Which ways of representing reality raise which ethical concerns? In *David Copperfield* (1849-50), however, Dickens used a real-life forger to explore a very specific technical problem relating to realism: its representation of time. Ushered into the plot after several monthly instalments, *David Copperfield's* real-life forger was integrated into an established literary character.

Dickens, Thomas Powell, and Uriah Heep

Stanley Friedman has demonstrated how Uriah Heep's forgeries of Mr. Wickfield's signature were modelled, at least in part, on Dickens's erstwhile friend and acquaintance, Thomas Powell. Through forgery, Powell had stolen £10,000 from his employer, Thomas Chapman. Exposed by Chapman in 1846, Powell apparently attempted suicide and he was consequently dismissed rather than prosecuted. Further forgeries followed in 1848; after a period of faked insanity in Miles's lunatic asylum,⁷⁴ he fled to America in 1849, where he was arrested for forgery; but his skill at deception meant that he again evaded prosecution. From New York, Powell published *The Living Authors of England* (1849), which, Friedman notes, "condescendingly denigrat[ed] both Dickens's art and his personal character" (39).

The Living Authors of England is a fascinating piece of a literary criticism.

Written by a forger who was later to appear in one of the very novels that he had

criticised (*David Copperfield*), the volume implicitly conceives of literary composition as akin to forgery. An “inferior dramatist” can change “a commonplace fellow into a hero, by the mere touch of his pen” (255). Washington Irving is “a very successful imitator” (204) and “Falstaff is as real a person to the world now as ‘Henry V,’ or ‘Richard III,’ and every other imaginary being in Shakspeare [*sic*] is equally on a par with the flesh and blood warriors of Froissart and Monstrelet” (273). In such pronouncements, Powell betrays his forger’s interest in the magical power of a pen to change the nature and course of someone’s existence, in the quality of imitation, and in the ways in which an entirely fictitious character might come to acquire the reality of a person who had actually existed.

More revealing, though, are Powell’s criticisms of Dickens’s works. First, Powell underlined the aesthetic difficulties raised by Dickens’s practice of serial publication: “compelled, by the very nature of his plan to publish his chapters separately, he has confined the artistic unity of his novel to the ephemeral necessity of producing something very piquant for every number [...] the crowning interest of the climax is divided among twenty numbers [in *Sketches by Boz*], published at stated intervals [...]” (154). Second, Powell associates Dickens with verisimilitude, albeit sneeringly: “[f]ew writers of modern times equal Mr. Dickens in the fidelity with which he selects some family in low life, and paints their portraits; they are complete Dutch pictures [...] daguerrotyped for posterity with an unerring accuracy” (160). Third, Powell argues that Dickens’s writing is distinguished by its being bounded by its author’s delight in his own mind: “Mr. Dickens [is] unable to get beyond his own experience” (161). As Philip Collins comments, Powell “foolishly depreciated the novels” (Rev. of *The Charles Dickens-Thomas Powell Vendetta* 209). But Powell was, nevertheless, a shrewd critic of them. The connections between serial

publication, realism, and the subjectivity of consciousness, are all explored in *David Copperfield* not only through the figure of the forger, I suggest, but through one shaped by the very forger-critic who raised these issues.

Dickens had certainly read, prior to its publication, part of the Dickens chapter of *The Living Authors of England* (Hayford et al., “Historical Note II” 607). Friedman argues that, after the ninth instalment of *David Copperfield*, Uriah Heep was Dickens’s revenge, for “in many ways Heep’s misdeeds seem reminiscent of Powell’s” (40). The chief difference between the two, as Friedman observes, is in physical appearance. The writhing, clammy and gaunt Uriah Heep is nothing like Thomas Powell, whom the *Dictionary of American Biography* (1935) describes as “the conventional bluff, hearty, and bulky Englishman of the John Bull type” (qtd. in Friedman 42). Of course, by the time that Dickens had decided to confront and display his anger towards Powell through turning Heep into a forger, Heep’s peculiar physical characteristics had already been established in *David Copperfield*.⁷⁵

Heep, forging, and time

Nevertheless, Dickens skilfully wove them into a metaphorical kind of forgery that contemporaries would have understood (far more so than us). The wonderfully repulsive body and mannerisms of Uriah Heep have attracted many modern commentators. Harry Stone views Heep as a “Boschlike” devil “spawned by the new, inhuman urban-industrial society” (97, 102). For Carol Hanbery MacKay, he is one of David’s “‘surrealized’ versions of his own projections” (245). Indeed, the conception of Heep as David’s grotesque doppelganger is common. Numerous studies of *David Copperfield* have explored how David’s retrospective narrative displaces David’s own sexual urges and socio-economic ambitions onto Uriah Heep.⁷⁶

But remarkably little has been said about Heep's watch-like features and habitat.⁷⁷ *David Copperfield*'s forger first presents himself to David as a "face [...] at a small window" (213). Later, "[t]he low arched door [of his "little round office" (227)] opened and the face came out" (213); Heep was "pointing with his long hand" (ibid.). These references to glass, a "pale face" (215), "skeleton hand[s]" (213), and a round watchcase-like room with a curved door, are followed by a cosmic image of temporal measurement. Heep's eyes are "like two red suns"; they are "either just rising or just setting" (216). His movements, too, evoke the image of a bizarre organic watch. The "snaky undulation pervading his frame" (368), the "snaky twistings of his throat and body" (229), and the involuntary "jerk[s] of his body" (556), all depict him as a coiling and uncoiling watch spring.

This impression of him as a humanoid watch mechanism goes beyond the visual. Heep's talk also calls attention to his being the embodiment of a timepiece: "It's like old times" (370); "So I shall have time [...] The moments slip away so" (372); "I am very umble to the present moment" (558); and "Really the time is come" (599). Other characters associatively connect him with watches or clocks, too. Heep's unwelcome presence in David's lodgings, for example, immediately reminds David of Mrs. Crupp, who was "soothed in her slumbers by the ticking of an incorrigible clock [...] which was never less than three quarters of an hour too slow" (373). When Heep "refer[s] to his pale-faced watch" (372), he gazes into that which he personifies in the novel: an "instrumen[t]" (369) for the uniform measurement of time.

The origins of Heep's watch imagery do not come from the real-life forger, Thomas Powell. Why *did* Dickens connect images or symbols of time to forgery so strongly? This is a question that cannot be answered without first giving a brief

account of the horological culture of the 1840s and 1850s. Then, as never before, most people “found their entire consciousness of time altered” (Landes 285). With the massive extension of the railway system in the 1840s, watches and clocks played an increasingly significant part in people’s external and internal lives. They were highly profiled objects.⁷⁸ Horology was also identified with modernity. When the contract to furnish the New Palace at Westminster with “the great clock and all the other clocks” was discussed by Parliament in 1847, it was spoken of in terms of “modern science” (“Clocks” 4). In that same year, all activities associated with the railway were governed by a single time.⁷⁹ This standardization of British public time was made possible by George B. Airy’s work on “galvanism,” a technique for synchronizing timepieces using electricity (Landes 285-86). It is Airy’s “galvanism,” rather than Galvani’s, that informs Betsey Trotwood’s injunction to Heep, ““Don’t be galvanic, sir!””(502).

Dickens himself was, of course, acutely aware of the psychological, sociological and linguistic effects of railway time on the individual. His tone is almost invariably disapproving. In 1844, he spoke of how an “old gentleman,” put out by a late train, “was up in arms, and his watch was instantly out of his pocket, denouncing the slowness of our progress” (“Conversazione” 888). A decade later, he reported how a small child “who can tell the clock, is now convinced that it hasn’t time to say twenty minutes to twelve, but comes back and jerks out [...] ‘Eleven forty! Eleven forty!’” (“An Unsettled Neighbourhood” 889). (In the verb “jerks” may be heard an echo of Heep’s own “jerk[y]” body.) Between 1849 and 1854, Dickens evidently connected time, clocks and watches with particular bodily movements. Heep is *David Copperfield*’s emblem of a new order of mechanistic temporal consciousness, one with which Dickens had little sympathy.

Critics have generally investigated Dickens's presentation and use of time in *David Copperfield* in terms of time's role in the complex relation between memory, writing and identity. In the readings of Kerry McSweeney, Kenneth M. Srok, Rosemary Mundhenk, and Albert A. Dunn, for example, time is the medium in which intricate psychological and sociological processes subtly construct and re-construct, for specific purposes and with various consequences, David Copperfield's (and possibly Dickens's) subjectivity. Certainly, the narrative voice is conscious of the irregular, non-linear and protean fashion in which human beings actually experience time. In several places, David registers the impact of memory on his mind's conception of time. Of his punitive childhood imprisonment by the Murdstones, for instance, he records that "those five days [...] occupy the place of years in my remembrance" (56). The mechanical time embodied by Heep is refuted by the narrative's essentially psychological - and therefore fundamentally human - conception of time. That Dickens should make Heep a forger makes remarkable sense within the terms of the novel's imagery and thematic oppositions. The idea of time that Heep symbolises is both industrially created and inauthentic to the internal human experience of time: forged.

Heep as David's displaced anxiety

But the novel's vilification of the sort of time embodied by Heep is problematic. Suggestively, David Kellogg connects the narrative's humanist conflations of chronological time to David's repressed anxieties about his bourgeois status. In Kellogg's analysis, Dickens's use of retrospective chapters "telescope[s] years into a few pages" and "allow[s] David briefly to review his own social climb in the present tense, without the potential complications of reflection and judgement" (68). The

novel is, Kellogg argues, “a socializing form” for David (ibid.). *David Copperfield* is undoubtedly an angst-ridden novel about social status and socio-economic opportunity. The narrative’s attempt to depict time as experienced by the human subject does indeed, it seems, facilitate the sublimation of David’s concerns about his formation by, and championing of, middle-class ideology.

The regular chronological time symbolized by Heep is at least authentic in its universal applicability and potential uniformity; its ontology is essentially egalitarian. Though presented ironically by Dickens, Heep’s words in the prison episode are the voice of “‘the system’ [that] disposed of all anomalies” (828), including, we may assume, the temporal “anomalies” of David’s narrative discussed by Kellogg. When Heep, convicted of forgery and fraud against the Bank of England, declares to his observers that “‘The best wish I could give you, Mr. Copperfield, and give all of you gentlemen, is, that you could be took up and brought here’” (834-35), he is perhaps not the “incorrigible hypocri[te]” that D. A. Miller, among others, regards him as being (“Secret Subjects” 35). In the penitentiary, Heep is in his native horological environment. There, he offers to his spectators a vision of a world in which everyone is regulated by mechanical time, “where every prisoner’s dinner was [...] set out separately [...] with the regularity and precision of clock-work” (827-28). Though miserable, it is a scrupulously fair system.

Unlike the self-serving temporal elasticity embraced by the middle-class writer David Copperfield, clock-time aims at allotting equal significance to each second for all people all of the time, at being “‘very umble to the present moment’” (558). By relentlessly seeking to impose externally a class-insensitive temporal uniformity onto the temporal individualism manifested by the narrative of “‘Mr. Copperfield,’” clock-time strives to equalise all temporal consciousnesses. Heep

represents the promise of a very different, though not necessarily better, society from the one in which David has achieved such socio-economic success.⁸⁰ The vehemence of the narrative's demonisation of Heep has often been remarked upon.⁸¹ But this demonisation perhaps signifies less the narrative's horror of mechanical time, than its displaced anxiety about its *own* temporal practice. Heep is indeed David's doppelganger. Heep points to the text's fear that David *too* is forging – in the sense of “creating, but fraudulently” – a conception of time: the self-indulgent, comfortable and bourgeois time of the middle-class author.

Time, serialisation, and forgers

How might one begin to account for these narrative tensions? In “Clocking the Reader in the Long Victorian Novel,” Michael Lund observes that “[t]he regular publication of the novel's separate parts becomes a kind of clock ticking in the reader's world” (22). This is a suggestive statement. Although *David Copperfield* was free within the confines of its narrative to invent its own, psychologically negotiated, temporal environment, it was, nevertheless, as a cultural production, subject to the linear clock-time of monthly publication from 1 May 1849 to 1 November 1850. *David Copperfield* was enmeshed in two antithetical temporal systems. One of the literary consequences of this process, it seems, was the text's questioning of the socio-economic legitimacy of its own narrative's temporal practice. And Uriah Heep – via Thomas Powell – was the text's site for expressing and exploring these doubts.

The example of Uriah Heep thus illustrates the importance of both the fictional forger's historical context and the imagery through which he (or she) is described. To neglect either may lead to the misidentification of the fictional forger's textual function. Murray Baumgarten's conclusion, I think, is mistaken for this reason.

Baumgarten argues that Heep “is the counterfeit hero of this novel, the simulacrum who points us to the real thing” (45). Heep is the text’s signifier of “bad writers [...] [who] cheat us readers of the value we had hoped to find in paying for their work” (46); “True writing,” Baumgarten continues, “is charismatic, providing real exchange value” (ibid.). But *David Copperfield*’s textual manoeuvres tell a different story. Heep does not point to *David Copperfield*’s confidence in the worth, whether capitalist or humanist, of its own narrative. Rather, Heep points to *David Copperfield*’s doubts about its narrative voice’s representation of time.

2.5 Powell, Philip, and misreadings

Thomas Powell’s connections to Charles Dickens – and Herman Melville – have been amply investigated.⁸² But little has been said, if anything, about Powell’s relation to William Makepeace Thackeray, whose novel *The Adventures of Philip* (1862) features forgery prominently. Although neither Thackeray’s letters nor his biographers suggest any specific connection between him and Powell,⁸³ Thackeray’s possible interest in such a figure around this time seems extremely likely. Gordon N. Ray records that Thackeray “was drawn [...] to the histor[y] [...] of the forger Dr. William Dodd, ‘one of the greatest humbugs [i.e. tricksters] who ever lived’ [...] but [the] book remained unwritten” (*The Age of Wisdom* 379). Ray also recounts a story concerning Thackeray’s publisher, George Smith, who had moved into the mansion in Gloucester Square formerly owned by the forger, MP and suicide, John Sadleir. At a dinner there in the late 1850s, Thackeray had reputedly joked about how the ghost of

Sadleir was searching for some hidden forged deeds (297-98). In “On A Pear-Tree” (Nov. 1862), Thackeray imagines Sadleir’s suicide; he also refers to the forgers Dr. Dodd, Henry Fauntleroy and William Roupell. Thackeray was therefore keenly interested in writing about real-life forgers in the late 1850s and early 1860s.

Powell, Thackeray, and *Philip*

Although Thomas Powell did not quite exhibit the extreme moral depravity of the Rev. Dr. William Bailey, he was nevertheless, “a thief, an unabashed forger, a compulsive liar, [and] an all-round scoundrel” (Olsen-Smith). Despite his arrest for forgery in New York, his journalistic career blossomed there. Powell became a prominent editor and man of letters, rising fast in the Anglophile world of mid-century Manhattan journalism (Hayford et al. 606-07). Until his death in 1887, Powell worked for the newspaper magnate Frank Leslie, cornering a niche for anecdotal accounts of English literary life. He edited *Frank Leslie’s Weekly* (est. 1855) and *Frank Leslie’s Ladies’ Magazine* (est. 1857) (“Thomas Powell”). While Thackeray was touring America in the early and mid 1850s, Powell wrote in turn for, among other papers, *Figaro!*, *The Lantern*, and the *New York Daily News* (Olsen-Smith).

It seems reasonable to assume that Thackeray had, at least, heard of this real-life forger, a compelling modern counterpart, after all, to William Dodd. By the end of his second American tour (1855-56), Thackeray was fairly familiar with the world of New York journalism and some of its personalities (D. J. Taylor 328-43, 373-84).⁸⁴ Although, by the early 1850s, “the New York literati of all camps had decided that the way to contain Powell was to ignore him” (Hayford et al. 609), Powell’s tarnished reputation appears to have been legendary in these circles. Moreover, Dickens’s transatlantic and very public legal battle with Powell, which lasted until 1852, must

surely have offered Thackeray, if he recollected it, an uncomfortable parallel to his own high-profile spat with Dickens over the Garrick Club affair in 1859.⁸⁵

The presence of Thomas Powell in *Philip*'s rascal and forger, Dr. George Brand Firmin, is certainly suggested by the text.⁸⁶ In a letter to Emily, Eliza Baynes explains how her husband became entrapped by one of Dr. Firmin's schemes. Like Powell, "Dr. F., *after the most atrocious deceit, forgery, and criminality of every kind*, fled the country [...]" (231). Like Powell, Dr. Firmin escapes to New York, where he ingratiates himself into the higher reaches of the city's journalism fraternity. In several letters to Philip, his son, Dr. Firmin gives detailed descriptions of the tastes, personalities and intrigues of the New York press. He tells Philip, for example, that in the *Gazette of the Upper Ten Thousand*, "Political treatises are not so much wanted as personal news regarding the notabilities of London" (472), and of how "[t]he readers here like a *high-spiced article*" (503).⁸⁷ This is precisely the sort of knowledge that Thackeray and Powell possessed in common, and upon which the latter writer extensively drew for his own journalistic career.⁸⁸ Finally, like Dr. Firmin's forgery of Philip's signature on a bill of exchange, Powell's forgery had been committed in New York and involved a London Bank ("Mr. Powell").⁸⁹

***Philip*, "A Shabby Genteel Story," and the "great danger and inconvenience to the public which [forgery] involves"**

Legal attitudes to the immorality of forgery had shifted since the Bailey case.

Whereas Townsend had identified forgery as a peculiarly sinister crime in 1850,

Fitzjames Stephen regarded it as merely another kind of theft in 1863.⁹⁰ In his

General View of the Criminal Law of England, published two years after the forgery statutes had been consolidated, he classified forgery as one of those crimes "which are

forbidden by the legislature, not by reason of their moral enormity, but for the specific purpose of discouraging a particular way of doing immoral acts on account of the great danger and inconvenience to the public which it involves" (141).

While Dr. Firmin is clearly as immoral as Bailey, Thackeray's interest in the crime itself centres on the "great danger and inconvenience" it causes to others. Chiefly, *Philip* is concerned with forgery from the position of those who might mistake Dr. Firmin's forgery for Philip's signature. Pendennis, the narrator, remarks that he "was minded to advertise in the papers that all acceptances drawn in Philip's name were forgeries" (555). From being essentially about competing philosophies of perception in *Lucretia*, systems of text/world exchange in *The Forgery*, belief and credibility in *Ruth*, and the validity of a subjective temporal consciousness in *David Copperfield*, forgery and realism came to centre in *Philip* on a different matter again. The topics of these conversations about realism between real-life forgers and Victorian novels evolved. Forgery in *Philip* is the site for exploring how reality, however conceived, can be misread by even the most apparently truthful and honest of witnesses. Misrecognition, misreading, and the dangers and inconveniences of mistaking the false for the genuine, define forgery in *Philip*.⁹¹

Philip revisits an earlier Thackeray fiction, "A Shabby Genteel Story" (1840), in which Dr. George Brand Firmin had started out life as George Brandon, a young Byronesque rogue. Through his cunning and charm, Brandon seduces a naïve and innocent girl into what, we half-suspect, is a sham marriage. *Philip*'s relation to this early novella has generally been viewed as a return to unfinished business.⁹² But the two texts' treatment of the idea of forgery suggests a more radical literary relationship. For the purpose of seducing Caroline Gann, George Brandon steals some verses from a rival lover, Andrea Fitch, and presents them as his own. But, whether

through a desire to underline the severity of Brandon's textual theft, or out of semantic ignorance, Fitch calls Brandon a "forger" and his deed a "forgery" (91). But Brandon did not try to pass off his own poem as Fitch's. The reverse happened. Even after one has accounted for the affinities between forgery and plagiarism,⁹³ Brandon is still a plagiarist. Dr. Firmin's blatant forgery in *Philip*, it seems, forcefully positions Fitch's accusation in "A Shabby Genteel Story" as an act of misrecognition.⁹⁴

Philip is remarkably eager to revise the misrecognitions of "A Shabby Genteel Story." Nowhere is this more apparent than in Brandon's seduction of Caroline. Although the narrator calls Brandon's love a "supreme act of scoundrelism" (56), this sentiment is dissolved by the narrator's breezy presentation of the couple's apparent marriage at the end: "God bless thee, poor Caroline! Thou art happy now, for some short space at least; and here, therefore, let us leave thee" (109). The narrator's final attitude towards Caroline's seduction is, as Edgar. F. Harden says, one of "light-heartedness" (106). According to Micael M. Clarke, moreover, Caroline is partly a "satire of the genteel idea of womanhood" (56). This, too, qualifies the reader's sympathy for Caroline's fate. But to treat Brandon's youthful amorous activities lightly, or to fail to acknowledge fully the gravity of the consequences of Brandon's actions on Caroline, is, in *Philip*, shown to be an error. In Thackeray's novel, Caroline is "a ruined and outcast woman" (130). Brandon's seduction of Caroline is exposed as a "crime" rather than a "fault" (65). Emphatically, the nature of his "crime" is that he had given Caroline "a false name" (131). This phrase repeatedly defines the reports of Brandon's seduction of Caroline (151, 156). In also giving a "false name" on a bill of exchange - that of his son - Dr. Firmin symbolically re-enacts his deceit on Caroline. Unwittingly, he relocates it within a more appositely *criminal* context of family-based

villainy. The novel's forgery is thus a hermeneutic correction of the novella's presentation of Brandon/Firmin's seduction of Caroline.

Mistaken narrators

Through the narrative practice of its own narrator, however, *Philip* points out that the narrator of "A Shabby Genteel Story" did not deliberately mislead his readers as to the true ethical significance of Brandon's villainy. In key respects, Pendennis is a typical Thackerayan narrator: "a calm, observant, indifferent spectator," in the words of Thomas Powell (167). Rather like the narrator of "A Shabby Genteel Story," Pendennis, with what he believes to be a discerning eye, takes the details of the reality he remembers and passes them on, apparently in good faith, if sometimes with a disclaimer as to their reliability, to the reader with equanimity.

With Victorian commentators, this narrative approach often counted against Thackeray. Thinking mainly of *Vanity Fair* (1847), *Pendennis* (1848-50), *The History of Henry Esmond* (1852), and *The Newcomes* (1853-55), William Caldwell Roscoe concluded in 1856 that, "[i]f the power of producing the impression of reality were the test of the highest creative power, Thackeray would perhaps rank higher than any one who has ever lived, - higher than Defoe [...] Thackeray thrusts his characters in among the moving everyday world in which we live. We don't say they are life-like characters; they are mere people [...] [H]is aim is to reproduce the world as he sees it [...] His philosophy is to accept men and things as they are" (125-33). But Roscoe found in Thackeray's obsession with conveying chiefly the externals of society life – and in Thackeray's subsequent reluctance to make clear moral judgements on his characters and their behaviour – evidence that Thackeray's "genius" was of the "lower order" (122).

And, to contemporary reviewers, *Philip* was a far less accomplished version of these aforementioned earlier novels. *The Saturday Review* opined that, “familiar characters of the old novels are reproduced, with the slightest possible variation” (311). Supported by a barrage of evidence, the anonymous reviewer accused Thackeray of “hashing up his old characters into a new form” (314). Walter Bagehot argued that, having taken “all the best traditional material” for his “plot,” Thackeray had then turned it into a “failure” (306). Modern critics, however, have tried to redeem the novel’s reputation, largely by pointing to its precocious “representations of human psychology” (Reed, *Dickens and Thackeray* 443) and “psychological allegory” (McMaster, “Funeral Baked Meats” 140). In Ina Ferris’s view, *Philip* “open[ed] up a new psychological dimension for the Victorian novel” (454) and “intuited the direction that later fiction would take” (455). Certainly, it is reasonable to conclude that Thackeray was, in 1861-62, forcefully (if perhaps unintentionally) leading the jaded “Realist School” towards psychological realism.

Judith L. Fisher’s recent monograph on Thackeray explores most extensively what she calls his “Hermeneutic of Skepticism” (1). Fisher demonstrates how “Thackeray’s [narrative] method insists on an existence, or a reality, which language can neither describe nor affirm” (275). *Philip*’s “play of narrative stances within the narrative voice and between narrators and characters,” she argues, “seems only to emphasize the futility of essentialism as a philosophy of either narration or characterisation” (205). Fisher is surely right to see *Philip* as a playful and ironic rejection of the notion of the reliable and authoritative narrator. My contention, however, is that she underestimates just how pragmatic the text is in seeking to *prove* the truth of this proposition.

Dr. Firmin's forgery and the question of Philip's legitimacy

Pendennis's narrative is not merely a sophisticated exemplum of realism's hermeneutic instability; it actually contains misreadings that can convincingly be identified as such. How aware, for example, was Pendennis of the extreme likelihood that Philip was not the legitimate heir to the Ringwood fortune? Pendennis makes many references to Philip's being a Ringwood, on his mother's side, but the text suggests that Mrs. Firmin was not, in fact, Philip's biological mother. Dr. Firmin's forgery of Philip's name not only corrects a misreading of George Brandon's earlier life history in "A Shabby Genteel Story." His forgery also, I believe, symbolically inscribes into *Philip* the question of Philip Firmin's legitimacy.

Ostensibly, the question of Philip's legitimacy revolves around the matter of whether Dr. Firmin is a bigamist or not. If it could be proved that Dr. Firmin had been legally married to Caroline Gann when he married Lord Ringwood's daughter, then Philip would be rendered illegitimate. But the puzzle of Caroline's maternal status clouds the issue to an even greater degree. Most critics have approached Caroline from Pendennis's perspective, and dismissed her belief that Philip is "her dead baby's reincarnation" as a "delusion" (Clarke 176). Even the sceptical Fisher sees Caroline – known also as "Little Sister" in *Philip* – as "a displaced mother figure" (34) and "a symbolic mother" (263), rather than Philip's possible biological mother.

But Caroline may be perfectly reasonable in treating Philip as her son. Dr. Firmin's earlier union with Caroline resulted in a child, whose death in Caroline's arms is recounted by Pendennis:

Insanity came upon her, as her dead infant was carried away: - insanity, and fever, and struggle [...] There is a gap in her life which she never can recall quite. But George Brand Firmin, Esq., M.D., knows how very frequent are such cases of mania, and that women who don't speak about them often will cherish them for years after they appear to have passed away. The Little Sister

says, quite gravely, sometimes, “They are allowed to come back. They do come back [...]” [...] Philip [...] [was] the object of this delusion. (120-21)

But was the child really dead? Repressed beneath the objectifying medical discourse is the personal experience of the “women.” This pushes the ambiguity of the pronoun “them,” which could just as easily refer to babies as to “cases of mania.” If so, the verb “appear” suggests that Caroline’s baby’s death was only an appearance, and that “passed away” euphemistically refers to death, rather than to the cessation of “mania.” In the throes of fever, Caroline herself was presumably in no position to know what was going on.

Pendennis’s version of these events, by his own admission, is partial. This particular episode is reliant on the testimony of Dr. Goodenough. Had the doctor “carried away” the sick, but living, child from the feverish girl, in the knowledge that young mothers’ “delusions” about their dead children were so common that this explanation would prevent any investigation into Caroline’s belief that her child was still alive? Thackeray had already published in *Punch* (23 Feb. 1850) “The Lamentable Ballad of the Foundling of Shoreditch,” which was based on the true story of a doctor who had found an abandoned child.⁹⁵ Had this scenario of a doctor saving a child from almost certain death also informed *Philip*? Had the baby boy been passed through the medical fraternity into his father’s hands? Caroline’s choosing of a house for Philip and his family by the Foundling Hospital suggests that Philip’s early life perhaps lay here (544). Certainly, Dr. Goodenough, who might know more than he lets on to Pendennis, says enigmatically, before he parts from him, that Caroline always “believed that Philip was her own child” (647).

The dates fit, too. According to Philip’s genealogical tree, Philip was born in 1825 (530). But we are told early in the novel that Philip was three in 1830 (51).

Caroline's irregular marriage took place in 1827 (165). These dates encourage the scrupulous reader to conclude that Philip is Caroline's child and that the genealogical tree is a deliberate error, made near the time of Pendennis's writing, on a document intended to confirm Philip as a Ringwood heir. Rather suspiciously, the deceitful Dr. Firmin "confirmed these histories" (531), and he nurtures Philip's respect, from an early age, for his assumed Ringwood lineage.

But Pendennis informs us that Lord Ringwood refutes General Baynes's suggestion that Philip possesses Ringwood features (196). Indeed, Philip's reddish tinges to his hair might, in fact, be explained not by Mrs. Firmin's auburn hair but by Dr. Firmin's father's red hair (4, 16). Furthermore, Mrs. Firmin's unwillingness to attend Philip, her seriously ill "son," is construed by Mrs. Pendennis as being an unnatural response for a mother (1). Indeed, Mrs. Firmin herself remarks, "'Who would suppose such a great boy as that could be my son?'" (11). To her husband, she says, "'this child is your image'" (10), suggesting that it is not hers. Philip, it therefore seems likely, *is* Caroline's son, after all.

The forgery of Philip's signature thus signifies the true doubtfulness of Philip's legal and socio-economic identity. Quite probably, Philip himself is as inauthentic as the signature of his name on the acceptance forged by his father: a forgery of a legitimate heir, a false claimant of the Ringwood fortune. In *Philip* as in *Ruth*, forgery is made flesh and bastardy is textualised. Such thinking was typical of the time. In 1856, *Household Words* explained how a new type of banknote would make forgery more difficult, and urged the Bank of England to provide guidance on how the public could distinguish the new notes from forged ones:

The parent [i.e. the Bank of England], if she can, should furnish us with marks of the legitimacy of her own children. (Dodd and Wills 559)

To mid-Victorians, financial forgeries were like illegitimate children. In *Philip*, this trope works in reverse. The forgery of Philip's name – an act that may be figured as the illegitimate progeny of the established signature – insists on the likelihood of Philip's illegitimacy as Philip Firmin. And, rather as Philip is willing to confer a spurious legitimacy upon his father's forgery of his signature, if necessary, so he himself is legitimised as a Ringwood heir by Caroline's silence.

In Caroline's self-sacrificing gesture of denying the authenticity of her marriage to the man she originally knew as George Brandon, Caroline falsely legitimates Philip as a Ringwood heir. At the same time, she perhaps de-legitimises him as her own son, Philip Brandon. In a hypothetical sense, he is doubly inauthentic: a bastard, for he might truly be the son of the mother who claims that her marriage was never valid; a bastard, for, if he is genuinely Mrs. Firmin's son, his father's previous marriage to Caroline (which was, the lawyer Mr. Bond explains, lawful [166]), makes him illegitimate. Depicted very soon after the 1858 Legitimacy Declaration Act,⁹⁶ Caroline's power to accept Philip publicly as hers or not highlights the arbitrariness with which the authenticating power of the individual mind can be exercised, and, most dramatically, the life-changing consequences of this power.

Forgery as an ironic sign of realist confidence

The mind of *Philip*'s narrator is also complicit in forging Philip as a Ringwood heir. At some barely conscious level, Pendennis has his suspicions about his friend's legitimacy, as the text's clues evidently imply, but he seems unable to confront such thoughts openly and in detail. Paradoxically, by alerting readers to Pendennis's probable error about Philip's legitimacy, *Philip* insists on the psychological veracity

of its realism. Although Pendennis's psychology is presented through the question of Philip's legitimacy, it is structured around the imagery and associations of Dr. Firmin's forgery. Forgery in *Philip* provides a metaphorical framework within which the text can express its faith in the validity of its highly subjectivist realism. Forgery in *Philip* is not a mark of narrative anxiety but of self-belief.

Founded on the almost certain fallibility of the narrator, *Philip*'s realism flags the likelihood of the narrator's misreading in a way that George Eliot's *Adam Bede* (1859), a novel that obtrusively foregrounds its narrator's truthfulness, does not.

Eliot's narrator declares:

I aspire to give no more than a faithful account of men and things as they have mirrored themselves in my mind. The mirror is doubtless defective; the outlines will sometimes be disturbed; the reflection faint or confused; but I feel as much bound to tell you, as precisely as I can, what that reflection is [...]" (175)

Eliot considers the possibility of distortions in the artistic reflection, but she plays down the possibility that reality can play tricks with mirrors. Thackeray's narrative stance in *Philip* has a disarming frankness that serves as a corrective to the smugness of *Adam Bede*'s narrator. Introduced into *Philip* by Thomas Powell, forgery is Thackeray's cautionary emblem of mid-Victorian narrators' misreadings. As the symbolic centrality of *Philip*'s forged bill suggests, these misreadings are rather like forged bills of exchange. As a reader, some you spot; some you don't.

2.6 Conclusion

In various ways and forms, real-life forgers entered these novels. They made their presence felt in a character trait, plot detail, or image. Bailey's habitation of *The*

Forgery and *Ruth* was understated. Powell's appearance in *David Copperfield* was probably easily detectable to those in the know. Wainewright's possession of *Lucretia* was obvious to the extent that mainstream Victorian literary criticism was alarmed. In common, however, these real-life forgers gave to their host novels notions of false or deceitful representation that were anchored in the disturbing reality of forgery. They enabled Victorian fiction to articulate – with some of the gravity of a real-life crime of representation - its doubts about such matters as its truthfulness, verisimilitude, plausibility, or probability. They were extraordinarily successful in this respect. By the late 1840s, forgery had established itself in fiction as a major metaphor in which a novel could voice - with considerable sophistication - its chief anxieties about a specific kind of realism. These anxieties could be relatively minor and finely tuned, as in *David Copperfield*, but more often they were tortuous and all-consuming, as in *Lucretia* or *The Forgery*. Although real-life forgers did not necessarily initiate Victorian fiction's confrontation with its insecurities about its forms of realism, they were a crucial factor in this process.⁹⁷

By 1861-62, Powell's forgeries had enabled *Philip* to explore the issue of how narrators might make unintentional misreadings of the reality they described. *Philip*'s textual response, however, was markedly different from these previous literary investigations into realisms. By the early 1860s, a novel had the wit – a sure sign of its narrative confidence - to underwrite the validity of its realism with an apparent anxiety about the truthfulness of its narrative. As I explain in the next chapter, real-life forgery became less a site for worrying about representation, than an opportunity to experiment with a new and exciting literary fashion. It became less matter-of-fact and more exciting. Indeed, forgery's role in developing *Philip*'s psychological realism

may be regarded less as an issue of representation, than as Thackeray's stylistic accommodation of a sensationalist motif.

What unites the novels considered in this chapter, however, is a common textual experience: real-life forgers drew out and developed these novels' ambivalence about realist representation. For *Lucretia*, mimesis destroyed the Ideal, yet mimesis seemed the best way for the novel to fight rising crime in the 1840s. For *The Forgery*, the legacy of the Defovian exchange system threatened the value of the early Victorian novel's representations, yet *The Forgery*'s proposed replacement model – natural history – killed off their vitality. For *Ruth*, verisimilitude was supposed to act as a moral stimulant to society's response to fallen women in the 1850s. Yet *Ruth* slightly misjudged society's prescription for probability in fiction at this time; *Ruth* consequently harmed, it feared, its own ethical purity. For *David Copperfield*, condemning the forged nature of mechanised time exposed how portraying human time with psychological realism might also be understood in terms of forgery. For *Philip*, forgery sustained the realism of extreme subjectivism; but this strategy also destroyed the reliability of the narrator's reading of reality. The Victorian novel's framing of forgery within structures of textual ambivalence persisted beyond the realist anxieties of the 1840s and 1850s, and into the sensationalisms of the 1860s.

Notes

¹ It is not my intention to unravel general concepts of reality and realism in nineteenth-century fiction. I do so later only in a limited and localised sense. See Shaw 1-37, who gives a sophisticated recent exposition of Victorian realisms and realities, and also a critique of others' discussions of the topic.

² Stang helpfully charts the use of the terms "realist" and "realism" in English periodicals during the 1850s (148-49).

³ By ethics, I mean a set of Victorian society's commonly agreed principles. By morals, I mean something similar, but essentially more subjective and arbitrary, a set of beliefs rooted in the emotions (Hume's position), rather than in reason (Kant's position).

⁴ Summarised from Curling and Motion. (On the factual inaccuracies in Motion's biography, see de Chantilly.)

⁵ See, for example, the *Examiner* 5 Dec. 1846.

⁶ See Haefner.

⁷ How serious is Wilde in "Pen, Pencil and Poison: A Study in Green"? As Danson observes (88), this is a vexed question. Kohl sees Wilde's Wainewright as an embryonic Wildean dandy (118). Gagnier argues the contrary: that Wilde's Wainewright is a parody of Walter Pater and that Wilde's essay is not a defence of art for its own sake (34-39). J. P. Brown suggests that Wilde is satirising the extremity of the position rather than the idea itself (44). To Wilde, she argues, truth was inherently paradoxical (69-76). Small stresses Wilde's celebration of the artistic creativity released from the critic's rejection of "moral or historical" perspectives (120-30). Most convincingly, Gillespie concludes that Wainewright is turned into "a polymorphic artifact [*sic*]" (42-43): Wilde is simply provoking thought about art. My own view is governed by the fact that Wilde, however ambivalently, first puts into cultural circulation the notion of removing ethics from a consideration of Wainewright's forgeries unequivocally.

⁸ See chapter three.

⁹ The most recent biography is by Leslie Mitchell (2003).

¹⁰ Leslie Mitchell argues that *Zanoni* "remained for Lytton a kind of personal manifesto" (135). See also Wolff, *Strange Stories* 145-232.

¹¹ See Snyder.

¹² *Eugene Aram* tells the story of a real-life murderer. In *The Disowned* (1828), Bulwer-Lytton weaves Henry Fauntleroy, who was hanged in 1824 for financial forgeries, into the character of Crauford.

¹³ Wainewright massively over-insured the life of his sister-in-law, persuaded her to leave the policies to him in her will, poisoned her, and finally put in his claims (Motion 157-59, 169-76).

¹⁴ Marc Vaulbert de Chantilly has located this confession in Home Office files (Ezard). The confession was not in Smith's possession, however, and it is therefore very unlikely that Bulwer-Lytton would have seen it.

¹⁵ See Winter 148-49.

¹⁶ Smith wrote to Bulwer-Lytton on 19 May 1846, "I shall be very happy to dine with you on Monday next – the 25th Inst. – if you prefer it to coming here" (Smith DE/K C2/43).

¹⁷ Smith's fictional relations with Wainewright did not end with *Lucretia*. Bulwer-Lytton's friend Dickens had taken out a policy with the Eagle in November 1841. Smith was later the inspiration for Meltham (Russell 102-03), the actuary in Dickens's "Hunted Down" (1859). Meltham skilfully tracks down Slinkton, who was, in turn, based on Wainewright (Hotten 1).

¹⁸ This critical response was also due to the turn towards social novels in the mid-forties, such as Disraeli's *Sybil; or, The Two Nations* (1845).

¹⁹ Apart from Forster, few reviewers knew about Henry P. Smith (Letter to Forster, 9 Dec. 1846; qtd. in Hollingsworth 193).

²⁰ Written anonymously by Archibald Alison.

²¹ To Marguerite Gardiner, Countess of Blessington, he wrote on 20 Dec. 1846: "the earnestness of my aims [in *Lucretia*] can alone console me in the indiscriminate & lavish abuse with all its foul misrepresentations which greets my return to literature [...] sooner or later the true moral of my Book will be recognized tho' the vindication may be deferred [...]" (Bulwer-Lytton DE/K C26/34). The second Earl of Lytton certainly believed in his grandfather's sincerity (2: 94-95).

²² Wainewright's transcription into Varney was, in this respect, very different from Fauntleroy's into Crauford in *The Disowned* (1828). As Russell argues (64-67), Crauford has little in common with the forger on whom he is based.

²³ Though Bulwer-Lytton did not always capitalize "Idealism" in his writings, he often did so. When I am referring to Bulwer-Lytton's Idealism in the sense that I have defined it, I have capitalized the word.

²⁴ By its very nature, Idealism cannot be defined precisely. See Skilton: "'Realism' is frequently found in opposition to 'idealism,' which is the assumption that something lies beyond the world of everyday

perceptions and Newtonian, scientific laws, and that this ‘something’ is grasped by imaginative power, which brings forth ideas clothed in poetic imagery” (*The Early and Mid-Victorian Novel* 87).

²⁵ In so far as possible, I have limited my quotations of Bulwer-Lytton’s pronouncements on Idealism to *Lucretia*. Christensen avers that Bulwer-Lytton’s championing of “the idealising impulse” had already been theorised before he wrote *Lucretia*: in his essay “On Art in Fiction” (1838), and in the introductory section of *Zanoni* (1842) (11-17). Certainly, Bulwer-Lytton’s note following his 1846 preface to *Lucretia* explains that, “[t]he passage in p. 164 [on the value of appearances] [...] is, in much, a repetition of an illustration in ‘Zanoni.’” In this note, Bulwer-Lytton clearly implies that *Lucretia* is informed, to some extent at least, by its author’s Idealist sensibility.

²⁶ Bulwer-Lytton had long been critical of Locke’s influence on English philosophy. In 1833, he lamented that, “[n]o new, idealizing school has sprung up amongst us, to confute and combat with the successors of Locke” (*England and the English* 321).

²⁷ In his 1844 review of Schiller’s *The Pilgrim*, Bulwer-Lytton wrote, “[t]he Pilgrim represents the active labour of the idealist to reach the Golden Gate [...] The belief in what is beyond Reality is necessary to all who would escape from the Real” (qtd. in Zipser 97).

²⁸ Schelling held the view that only in art can human beings achieve true consciousness.

²⁹ See the second instalment of “On Art in Fiction,” originally published in the April 1838 edition of *The Monthly Chronicle*.

³⁰ This association of Varney, the snake, and artistic vision probably originates in an article in the *Melbourne Argus*, 6 July 1841: “Wainwright’s snakish eyes kindled with unearthly fire” (Hotten 27).

³¹ See Skilton, *The Early and Mid-Victorian Novel* 87-88 and Stang 153-54.

³² More generally, Glenda Manning Davis finds this relation between Bulwer-Lytton’s theory and his practice a relatively untroubled one.

³³ Rosemary Ashton characterises their relationship as one that proved mutually “helpful during the 1840s,” but she notes that, “the two men never became intimate” (69).

³⁴ My account is a brief summary of *The Times* reports of the case. These numbered six, and ran from 25 Nov. 1842 to 13 Feb. 1843.

³⁵ See Percy Hetherington Fitzgerald.

³⁶ The association of immorality and disease would have seemed perfectly logical to the early Victorian mind. Edwin Chadwick had published his *Report on the Sanitary Condition of the Labouring Population of Great Britain* in 1842, and his morality-driven sanitary reforms were high on the public agenda.

³⁷ Summarised from *DNB*; augmented and amended by S. M. Ellis.

³⁸ See Groom 217-55.

³⁹ S. M. Ellis gives the year of publication as 1849 (288). Vol. 2 of the Cambridge University Library copy is dated 1848. The *Athenaeum* and the *Spectator* reviewed the novel in December 1848. Presumably, therefore, *The Forgery* was published in December 1848, with the year of publication being given as the following year.

⁴⁰ S. M. Ellis reprints a letter from James to Allan Cunningham, dated 27 Aug. 1836, which both details James's strategies for dealing with critics and illustrates James's characteristic generosity to other authors (72-75).

⁴¹ The shift from "Bailey" to "Hayley" would be quite in keeping with James's playfulness with rhyme.

⁴² "An acceptance is an engagement to pay the bill [of exchange], the person writing the word accepted across the bill with his name under it. This may be *absolute* or *qualified*. An *absolute* acceptance is an engagement to pay the bill according to its request. A *qualified* acceptance undertakes to do it conditionally" (Binny 382).

⁴³ Forgery appears to have been a common and versatile metaphor at this time. Joss Marsh, for example, notes how blasphemy was commonly equated with counterfeiting in the 1840s (120).

⁴⁴ Marx disputes this position (243-46).

⁴⁵ Although Bartleby does not, in fact, do his job as a scrivener, he is nevertheless representative of that occupation.

⁴⁶ Rightly, Eagleton describes *The Anxiety of Influence* (1972) as "daringly original" and views it a beacon of "Romantic humanism" (159). I find in the tensions in *The Anxiety of Influence* – between Bloom's respect for the author and his appreciation of the text's unconscious – a ready analogue for my own project.

⁴⁷ See Watt 62-63.

⁴⁸ See Meier. Crusoe's desert island adventure can even be read as a mercantile allegory. In Defoe's *Complete English Tradesman*, "Discounters" (of bills) are identified as the "true Canibals, and man

eters” (qtd. in Thompson 129). The cannibals in *Robinson Crusoe* allegorise the early eighteenth-century merchant’s fear of credit.

⁴⁹ The essentially similar Victorian credit system is explained in Jevons’s *Money and the Mechanism of Exchange* (1875).

⁵⁰ See Evans, *The Commercial Crisis 1847-48* (1848). This contemporary document analyses (with statistics) the crisis in terms of the impact of the railway mania, the food and money panic, and the 1848 revolution in France.

⁵¹ My account is summarised from *The Times* “Exchequer Bills” reports: 28 Oct. 1841; 2 Nov. 1841; 7, 20, 23, 25, 28 Dec. 1841; *Exchequer Bills Forgery: Report of the Commissioners* (1842).

⁵² For a very different account of Victorian fiction’s relation to Defoe’s exchange systems, see Trotter. Although Trotter does not discuss the idea of language as money, concluding that, “three economies – of trade, of conversion, of practical ethics – operate in *Robinson Crusoe*” (36), he does connect Defoe’s systems of circulation to those of Victorian fiction.

⁵³ Money has no value on Crusoe’s island (57), but the matter is one of circumstance rather than a doubt about the exchange system. Money’s theoretical exchange value *per se* is not questioned.

⁵⁴ The idea of circulating (or lending) libraries had existed since the eighteenth century. Although the most famous of Victorian circulating libraries, Mudie’s, opened in Oxford Street in 1852, Charles Mudie was already lending books in Bloomsbury in 1848 (Sutherland, *Victorian Novelists and Publishers* 24-30).

⁵⁵ Sutherland notes James’s one attempt at serialised publication – *The Commissioner* (1841-42) – in *Victorian Fiction* (92).

⁵⁶ In 1872, George Eric Mackay noted that G. P. R. James was “the author of half the romances in the circulating library” (“An English Grave in Venice,” qtd. in S. M. Ellis 248).

⁵⁷ *The Forgery* is thus one of the first novels to connect forgery, finance, and representation in fiction so prominently. For a more recent example, see Romney on Gide. (Curiously, G. P. R. James preferred to dictate his novels [“General Preface” xv]: he did not himself forge *The Forgery*, as such.)

⁵⁸ Although Hack does not consider G. P. R. James, he argues that mid-nineteenth-century authors were generally untroubled by the novel’s materiality. Nevertheless, the fact could not be ignored. In 1877, Mark Pattison opined:

Literature is a commodity [...] certainly authorship is a profession [...] demand creates supply, and prescribes its quantity and quality. You see at once how vital to literature must be the establishment of this commercial principle as to its regulator, and how radical must have been the revolution in the relation between writer and reader which was brought about when it was established. (qtd. in Gilbert 32)

As Bradley Deane has recently shown (2003), the developing publishing conditions were indeed a source of considerable anxiety to many novelists.

⁵⁹ G. P. R. James thus extends and modifies Pope's analogy of the Grub-street hack as a "silk-worm" (*The Dunciad* 564).

⁶⁰ James deserves recognition for this. While George Eliot is a major figure in the latest critical work on the subject – George Levine's *Dying to Know: Scientific Epistemology and Narrative in Victorian England* (2002) – G. P. R. James is not mentioned at all.

⁶¹ See M. Brown.

⁶² Defoe's literary amorality remained an issue for Victorians:

The History of the Plague, the *Memoirs of a Cavalier*, *Robinson Crusoe*, *Moll Flanders*, *Captain Carleton*, all are fictions, but they were written as, and intended to be taken for, real and genuine books [...] No man of the highest moral feelings could have constructed such a series, however clever, of literary impositions as Defoe produced.
(“The Defoe Monument,” *Saturday Review* 24 Sept. 1870: 392)

⁶³ With William Gaskell, she wrote “Sketches among the poor, No. 1,” which was published in the January 1837 edition of *Blackwood's Magazine* (Chapple 411).

⁶⁴ Benson is drawn from other sources, too. See Cunningham 127-29.

⁶⁵ Warren noted that Bailey styled himself “William Bailey, Clerk, LL.D.” (463).

⁶⁶ See Matus 113-31, d'Albertis 75, Schor 45-79, Retan, Hatano, Logan 44-47 and Anderson 111-35.

An interesting exception is Audrey Jaffe's *Scenes of Sympathy* (2000), which locates Benson's lie in the wider context of middle-class identity (79-88).

⁶⁷ Ruth herself was criticised for being a far too idealised figure for a novel that claimed a high degree of realism. See S. Foster 104-06.

⁶⁸ Moral examples were particularly important to Unitarians like Gaskell. Cunningham convincingly suggests that Benson is a Unitarian minister (one who was supposed to instruct others in his society by his own an example) (139-41).

⁶⁹ See "Forgeries of Parish Registers." It was, in fact, a relatively common crime in the 1830s and 1840s, and would, of course, be Percival Glyde's solution to concealing his illegitimacy in Collins's *The Woman in White*.

⁷⁰ Ruth's connection of forgery to a man of religion was remarkably topical. In 1853, a Wesleyan preacher, William Wheeler Yelf, was found to have committed forgery and fraud on the Isle of Wight Bank, of which he was manager (Robb 59).

⁷¹ From 1853, penal servitude could be substituted for transportation (see McConville 122-23).

⁷² In *The Power of Lies* (1994), John Kucich is struck by the way in which lies assume a tremendous power in Victorian novels. This, he argues, was a consequence of the "overdetermined" importance of truth telling in Victorian England.

⁷³ As Billington emphasises (2002), Gaskell's commitment to realism was indeed a kind of faith.

⁷⁴ See the R. H. Horne manuscript, in Moss and Moss.

⁷⁵ Heep's forgeries, written into the text about a month before each serial publication, are exposed in No. 16 (Aug. 1850) and No. 17 (Sept. 1850). On the composition patterns of *David Copperfield*, see Butt and Tillotson 114-76.

⁷⁶ For example, see Welsh, *From Copyright to Copperfield* 143-44, Poovey 96-100.

⁷⁷ Even Juliet McMaster, who specifically discusses the physical characteristics of Dickens's characters in *Dickens the Designer* (1987), makes no mention of Heep's watch-like qualities.

⁷⁸ Seizures of illegally imported foreign watches were commonly reported and, as part of the government's effort to protect the British watch trade, the Regulation Act was re-enacted in 1845, a measure which prohibited the export of watches from Britain. *The Times* ran articles on watches and the watch trade on the following dates in the mid-1840s: 22 Oct. 1844; 13 and 23 Sept. 1845; 16 Oct., 4 and 17 Nov. 1845. This last article is an extensive account of the watch trade and the law. A further article on watches appeared on 26 Jan. 1849.

⁷⁹ These developments hugely influenced Dickens's earlier novel, *Dombey and Son* (1846-48).

⁸⁰ Others have also viewed Heep as an egalitarian figure. See Jordan. By referring to Chartism, David's dream of Uriah as a pirate, and David's similarities to Uriah, Jordan argues for Heep's "potential as the leader of a dangerous political conspiracy" (81).

⁸¹ See, for example, Gomme 28-29.

⁸² See Wilfred Partington (on Dickens) and Olsen-Smith (on Melville).

⁸³ None of the letters and private papers published in Gordon N. Ray's selection – or in Edgar F.

Harden's supplement – refers to Powell. None of the following biographers mentions him: Lewis

Melville, Ann Monsarrat, D. J. Taylor, Catherine Peters, and Gordon N. Ray.

⁸⁴ In "On Half a Loaf," Thackeray talks knowledgeably and authoritatively about the New York papers (192-200). During Thackeray's first American tour, Powell and Thackeray shared the same circle of friends in New York; but they probably never met (Parker, *Herman Melville* 1: 571).

⁸⁵ On Dickens and Powell, see Moss and Moss; on the Garrick Club affair, see D. J. Taylor, 396-414.

⁸⁶ Dr. Firmin is fashioned from figures other than Powell, of course. See Birker, who attributes the fast and extravagant nature of Dr. Firmin's lifestyle – but not his forgery – to the racier side of Dr. Elliotson, Thackeray's physician and friend (82-84).

⁸⁷ In the letters from which the first of these quotations is taken, Dr. Firmin tries to persuade Philip, who is at this time a minor writer for the *Pall Mall Gazette*, to make some creative contributions to the London society gossip column of a New York paper edited by an acquaintance (475).

⁸⁸ Hershel Parker's "Preface" to his forthcoming book, *Herman Melville and The Powell Papers* neatly summarises Powell's style of journalism: "the incorrigible crook survived scandal to flourish in the middle reaches of the new field of American pop-journalism throughout the Gilded Age, always ready with his bottomless stock of recyclable anecdotes about British writers – anecdotes always in demand with anglo-worshipping Americans" (qtd. in Olsen-Smith).

⁸⁹ See *The Times* 10 Jan. 1850.

⁹⁰ In *The Woman in White* (1859-60), Walter Hartright defines Sir Percival Glyde's forgery in similar terms: "robbery of the rights of others" (539).

⁹¹ Forgery thus engages with one of the big questions in Thackeray studies. See Sutherland, "Thackeray's Errors."

⁹² See Pearson 210, Shillingsburg 44.

⁹³ See Groom 25-31, 48-50.

⁹⁴ My account of the misrecognitions in "A Shabby Genteel Story" (and *Philip*) stems from my reading of Slavoj Žižek's *The Sublime Object of Ideology* (1989), 58-62. Hegel's theory of repetition, Žižek maintains, insists that the meaning or internal logic of a historical event is only knowable after its repetition. Casesarism, he explains by way of example, was a "historical necessity" in the face of the declining Roman Republic, but one that could not be accepted by "opinion" in the shape of Caesar

himself. The conspirators were thus merely agents of the ‘cunning of reason,’ unwittingly bringing into being the very system of government that they claimed to be trying to prevent. Žižek argues that this “so-called historical necessity *is constituted through misrecognition*.” Caesar’s rise and fall is “too traumatic” for “opinion” to recognise its historical significance at the time. Only repetition (“caesarism” after Caesar in the form of Augustus) can give the initial event (Caesar) its true historical significance. In repeating aspects of “A Shabby Genteel Story,” *Philip* similarly identifies its predecessor’s acts of “misrecognition” (whether by other characters or the narrator). Dr. Firmin’s forgery in *Philip*, moreover, was perhaps even initiated by Fitch’s “misrecognition” of Brandon (later, Dr. Firmin) as a forger in “A Shabby Genteel Story.” Žižek’s Lacan-inspired account of Hegel, therefore, suggests that Thackeray’s novella fulfils its literary historical meaning only in the repetitious novel whose existence it inscribes.

⁹⁵ On Thackeray’s literary interest in the theme, see Birker 77.

⁹⁶ Teichman notes that this was passed to set up “some kind of procedure which would enable a disputed question of legitimacy to be settled once and for all” (31).

⁹⁷ For a typical account of Victorian fiction’s anxieties about realism that does not consider forgery, see Lloyd 88-140. (Lloyd discusses Dickens and Eliot.)

3. Forgers and Sensationalisms

Often stylish and usually secretive, forgery could be a sensational crime as well as a commonplace one. By the 1860s, this was unquestionably so. Fictional forgery was in vogue. With Sir Percival Glyde's forgery in *The Woman in White* (1859-60), forgery became one of the sensation novel's predominant motifs and plot devices.¹ Speeding around some appalling secret (usually a crime), sensation novels' plots were Byzantine,² and designed to give the reader – literally - a “nervous shock” (Mansel 78). Sensation novels unsettled readers in other ways, too. They disclosed, in another of H. L. Mansel's panicky phrases, the moral darkness “around us and among us” (77).³ Typically, sensation novels were fascinated by the process of detection and by the law's powers over the private domain.⁴ The genre was commonly identified as a predominantly female form, and it was often discussed in terms of how it degraded women.⁵ In sometimes appearing to treat matters of gender and class subversively, sensation fiction variously delighted and disturbed mid-Victorian readers.⁶ Sensation fiction was highly popular, populist, and routinely identified with low culture's infiltration of middle-class forms.⁷ More practically, sensation fiction's rise was associated with the novel's increasing serialisation in periodicals, the railway bookstalls, and the circulating libraries (Mansel 75-78). Sensation novels were modern in every sense.

Questions of genre

Although the precise definition of a sensation novel varied during the period 1860-1880 (Gilbert 81), the Victorian novel's chief taxonomists – the critics writing in

middle-class journals – confidently knew sensation fiction when they saw it.

Reviewing a novel in 1874, the *Athenaeum* honed in on its precarious plot assembly:

“Considering that in the course of the story we have a forgery, a bigamy, a murder, and two accidents (one fatal), we think that ‘Geoffrey’s Wife’ can hardly be called other than a sensation novel [...]”⁸ Here, forgery unequivocally signifies sensation fiction; it did not – or could not - do so in the *Athenaeum*’s review of G. P. R. James’s *The Forgery* in 1848. Whereas a fictional forgery in the 1840s and 1850s was largely genre-blind, by the 1860s, it was, almost exclusively, related metonymically to sensation fiction. Unless penned by a male literary giant and stripped of its suspense value (as was the case with Thackeray’s *Philip*), fictional forgery was likely to mark a novel in the 1860s and 1870s as an inferior and morally dubious kind of writing.

Pamela K. Gilbert has done some of the most interesting work on genre and the sensation novel. In her analysis, a genre is “a meta-reading, or a set of reading instructions, that coexists with a text and limits the range of its multiplicity” (5). Primarily, she explores how novels are located as sensation novels by discourses of the body, women and disease. One of the consequences of this mode of generic positioning, she argues, is that contemporary (and modern) readers privilege in sensation novels one plot over another. Readers were (and perhaps still are), she suggests, pre-conditioned to read sensation novels as second-rate fiction at best. In her consideration of *Lady Audley’s Secret* (1862), by Mary Elizabeth Braddon, “the most traditionally sensational novelist” (79), Gilbert shows how that novel’s placement by critics, readers, and by Braddon herself, as a sensation novel, leads to the dominance of the Lady Audley plot (“popular culture melodrama” [96]) at the expense of the Robert Audley plot (“a traditional high-culture theme” [ibid.]).⁹ According to Gilbert,

however, Braddon's texts subtly destabilise from within the generic label placed upon them from without.

My approach to genre is rather different. Most of the novels I consider in this chapter are not those that subtly resist the label "sensation novel." I am primarily interested in those novels that embrace one of the sensation novel's major metonyms – forgery – with the consequence that their form takes an artistic direction other than that which it might have taken. I examine – in the main – bold literary experiments in (or with) sensationalism (rather than sensation novels suffering from a crisis of generic identity): the domesticated Gothic of Charles Dickens's *Great Expectations* (1860-61); the forgery plot in Anthony Trollope's *Orley Farm* (1861-62); and the "supernaturalised" sensationalism of Sheridan Le Fanu's *Wylder's Hand* (1863-64). I also discuss Emma Robinson's Braddon-esque newspaper novel, *Madeleine Graham* (1864), an exception, in a number of important respects, to this pattern. Although novels in the sensation mode are very much concerned with reality and realism,¹⁰ they generally drew real-life forgery less into issues of representation, as happened with novels primarily concerned with a particular aspect of realism, I propose, than into questions of genre.

3.1 Thomas Provis and *Great Expectations*: Forging Gothic

Of the many generic origins of *Great Expectations*, sensationalism was the most recent. *Great Expectations* was first published as a weekly serial in *All The Year Round* as a successor to *The Woman in White*. Contemporaries saw it both as

belonging to the new sensation genre and as being a competitor to Collins's novel.¹¹

Great Expectations includes forgery (Compeyson's) and a murder (Mrs. Joe's), a middle-class "evil genius" (Compeyson again), an incarcerated woman in white (Miss Havisham), and secrets (those of Pip and Jaggers, mainly). But *Great Expectations* is neither largely plot-driven, nor fascinated by middle-class modernity, nor packed with frenzied incident, nor constantly striving to "electrify the nerves of the reader" (Mansel 77). Dickens's novel acknowledges *The Woman in White*, but does not exactly share its interests, its methods, or its relationship with the reader of *All The Year Round*.

Great Expectations refers to sensationalism chiefly via the Gothic. Through its Gothic presentation of the Magwitch and Miss Havisham plots, *Great Expectations* returns sensationalism to the Gothic genre from which the sensation novel partly grew, and from which the sensation novel sought to distinguish itself.¹² With the massive success of *The Woman in White*, it must surely have seemed to Dickens in 1860, both as an author and as a magazine editor, as though sensation fiction was to be the refurbished literary home for the Gothic. But *Great Expectations* refers to the sensation novel, I suggest, less to capitalise on its marketability, than to mark it out as its generic rival for the appropriation of the Gothic.

The case of Thomas Provis

But first I wish to detail the major stimulus for Dickens's combative approach to sensation fiction: a real-life forger and the law's handling of his story. By 1860, Dickens had often used real-life forgers for his fiction.¹³ There was, of course, his use of Thomas Powell in *David Copperfield* (1849-50). In addition, he had fashioned

Merdle's career of crime and lurid death in *Little Dorrit* (1855-57) from John Sadleir.¹⁴ While visiting Newgate gaol in 1837 for a piece on prisons, moreover, he caught sight of Thomas Griffiths Wainewright (Forster, *Life of Dickens* 1: 111).

Wainewright later surfaced in the pages of his fiction as Rigaud/Blandois in *Little Dorrit* and as Mr. Slinkton in "Hunted Down" (1859).¹⁵ It is likely that contemporary readers would have recognised these allusions; through modern editors' footnotes, they are now familiar to many of today's readers, too.

Far less well known, though, is the main forger behind *Great Expectations*. Philip Collins pointed to "Tom Provis," forty-one years ago, in an endnote, as the possible origin of Magwitch's alias (*Dickens and Crime* 342 n. 42). He did not, however, expatiate on Thomas Provis's extraordinary variety of forgeries. Thomas Provis was convicted, in 1854, of "forging certain documents, purporting to be deeds and certificates belonging to the Smyth family" (*The Heath House and Ashton Cause* 29).¹⁶ Sir Richard Hugh Smyth, alias Dr. Smyth, alias Dr. Smith, alias Thomas Provis, initially entered legal proceedings as the plaintiff at the Gloucester assizes on the 8, 9 and 10 August 1853, intending to disinherit the present successor to the Smyth estates, John Henry Greville Smyth, a minor. Provis sought to usurp Greville Smyth by fabricating evidence of an earlier marriage. This, he hoped, would establish him as "Richard Hugh Smyth" and as the legitimate heir.

His claim rested on the fiction that Sir Hugh Smyth and a Jane Vanderbergh had married privately in Ireland in 1796, and that he was their son. In an attempt to secure this story in a court of law, he forged the marriage entry and witnesses' signatures in the supposed Smyth family bible (for there were no marriage registers in Ireland at that time). "Richard Hugh Smyth" maintained that his mother had died in childbirth in 1797, at Warminster, while staying at the house of a carpenter and

builder, John Provis. He asserted, moreover, that his birth had been kept a secret so that his father could marry the daughter of the Bishop of Bristol, a Miss Wilson.

“Richard Hugh Smyth” also offered two wills as evidence of his story. He asserted that one had been given to him by his old wet-nurse in Warminster, and that the other had mysteriously been sent to him by a person or persons unknown. In fact, in an effort to prove that Sir Hugh Smyth recognised his lost son’s legitimacy before his death in 1824, Provis had recently forged these wills, and dated them 1822 and 1823. The authenticating seal carrying the family motto “Qui capit capitur,” however, was misspelled “capitor” by the engraver, and the paper was found to be of recent manufacture.¹⁷ According to Sir Frederick Thesiger, Greville Smyth’s counsel at the civil trial, the wills were “clumsy forgeries” (29). At the same point in the trial as these damning discoveries, a telegram from an Oxford Street jeweller was sent to Thesiger at Gloucester. Its contents forced from Provis a confession that a ring and brooch that he had presented as proof of his mother’s identity were, in fact, fakes. “Richard Hugh Smyth” was then quickly exposed as Thomas Provis, a convicted horse-thief and former schoolmaster. At the subsequent criminal trial, he was sentenced to transportation for twenty years, but he died, in 1855, in Dartmoor prison.

The crucial narrative framework for much of Provis’s story was, of course, nineteenth-century law. A prisoner could not speak on oath at a criminal trial until 1898 (Coady 203). Nevertheless, before this date, his “extra-judicial” voluntary confession could, if proved by admissible evidence, alone bring about his conviction (Schramm, *Testimony and Advocacy* 29). More generally, Alexander Welsh has shown, in *Strong Representations* (1992), how both testimonial evidence and circumstantial evidence became progressively less authoritative during the nineteenth century. In Welsh’s account, the law came to accept that an honest witness’s

testimony might display less the truth of what an individual saw or heard than the idiosyncrasies of his or her perception, memory and linguistic reconstruction. Consequently, the primacy of testimony in the courtroom was displaced by, in Welsh's phrase, "strong representations": the expert marshalling of circumstantial evidence - facts that the law regarded as self-evident and beyond dispute - to produce a narrative supporting a particular conclusion.

After a time, however, the law came to see that the facts of the accused's story might not speak for themselves; the prosecution might construct an erroneous narrative. The law therefore reluctantly allowed the accused a professional defence.¹⁸ The Prisoners' Counsel Act of 1836 extended full legal representation to felons. Jan-Melissa Schramm convincingly dates the beginning of this juridical recognition of the tricky business of representing the prisoner's story "some thirty or forty years earlier than the mid-Victorian date claimed by Welsh," however, in the legal debates of the decade preceding the Prisoners' Counsel Act (109). One of the chief consequences of the Act, Schramm concludes, was the "silenc[ing]" (119) of the prisoner at the criminal trial. Characteristically, the mid-Victorian felon's narrative was mediated through his defence counsel (119-20). By the eighteen fifties, the forger did not, in general, himself voice his story in a criminal court.

Although Schramm suggests that the defence counsel in a criminal trial functioned as the author of his client's story (126-27), the proceedings of both Provis trials, considered together, distort this model. Provis's story was heard twice: as a possible truth at the civil trial, and as a known fiction at the criminal trial. Provis's fraudulent inheritance claim at the civil trial was conducted by his counsel, William Bovill, who confidently declared that "'no link of the chain [of evidence] will be found wanting'" (Thesiger 5).¹⁹ In the civil trial, though, it was less the lawyer than

the accused-to-be who was the author of the narrative of “Richard Hugh Smyth.”

Provis forged – fraudulently made, that is - the links of his fictitious character’s story, which he then gave to Bovill, the unreliable narrator, to assemble and present. As Inspector Field remarked to Provis after the civil trial, the story “would make a first-class novel” (“The Smyth Forgery Case,” *The Times* 29 Aug. 1853). The *Spectator* commented that Provis “could probably have written a passable romance, though he could not provide against all chances of mistake in a practical fiction” (rpt. in “Smyth v. Smyth,” *The Times* 17 Aug. 1853). The Provis case entwined forgery, law, and fiction tightly.

Although Bovill largely narrated Provis’s story to the civil court, Provis himself defended his story at the criminal trial as its author. The appointed counsel, Gelinger Symons, gave up the brief, perhaps because it emerged that Provis could not pay the fee (“The Smyth Forgery Case,” *The Times* 27 Aug. 1853). Provis therefore gave “a long and rambling speech” in his own defence (“The Trial of Richard Hugh Smyth” 87). In this speech, he hid behind his erstwhile official narrators, arguing that he could not be accused of *uttering* forged documents because it was his solicitors, and not he, who had presented the supposed evidence of his claimed identity to the civil court. Furthermore, he argued that, “to copy the names of men who perhaps never lived [...] was no forgery” (ibid.). Celebrated in *The Times* for its novel-like qualities on 17 August 1853, the Thomas Provis case was a clear and high profile example of how a fictional narrative could invite a charge of forgery.

The Victim of Fatality

Just before the criminal trial in 1854, Provis wrote and published a defence of his claim to the Smyth baronetcy: *The Victim of Fatality, or the Claimant of Ashton Court; a Romantic Tale of the Nineteenth Century, being the Life and History of the Plaintiff in the Late Trial of Smyth versus Smyth, written by Himself, whilst a prisoner in the County Gaol of Gloucester*.²⁰ Written in a heightened emotional style, this “Romantic Tale,” incidentally celebrates the classic *disjecta membra* of the Gothic: the imprisoned and delusional narrator who has “held imaginary converse with the unconscious dead” (18); the sensation of “horrid fear” (5); tombstones, charnel houses and supernatural vengeance. The narrator also explains how,

some years back one of the males of the family was buried alive; and since that time the dread of a similar fate has so haunted the family, that all the males have been decapitated before finally concealed in the narrow mansion destined to moulder with their bones [...]. And, remark, to such an extent has this idea engrafted itself on the minds and susceptibilities of my family, that my father, myself, and son, were born with the marks of the same upon the throat [...] a mark like a cut from ear to ear, just under the throat, as if the head had been taken off and mysteriously replaced [....]” (5-6)

Fundamentally, the narrator strives to attach himself to the Smyth lineage through an image of Gothic stigmata.

But the narrative itself repeatedly undermines this attempt. The phrase “thrown entirely upon the resources of my own mind” (7) promotes the typically Romantic idea of the unreliability of an incarcerated mind at the mercy of its own imaginings. The narrator’s admission that at school he “could imitate any boy’s voice” (26), and his account of impersonating “a wounded officer” in Paris to solicit “applause and commiseration” (31), cast him in the role of the impostor. Furthermore, to deny his forgeries, the narrator quotes Macbeth’s response to Banquo’s ghost –

“‘Thou canst not say I did it’” (51) - and yet this strategy seems to defeat his declared purpose. (Though Macbeth does not hold the weapon, he nevertheless arranges and is responsible for Banquo’s murder.) It is possible that in the *Macbeth* quotation Provis is playing the Romantic game of doubles, referring to the innocence of “Richard Hugh Smyth,” in whose name he is writing, while displacing responsibility for the forgeries onto Thomas Provis, an identity he disclaims. Both accidental and psychologically necessary, perhaps, Provis’s quasi-confession of his attempt to forge the essentially Gothic identity of a Smyth seeps out through the fiction.

Dickens and Provis

As Philip Collins suggests, Dickens would probably have known the particulars of the Thomas Provis case from his conversations with Inspector Field and from his reading of *The Times* (209-10, 342 n. 42).²¹ The strongest evidence, however, seems to lie in Dickens’s connection with *The Household Narrative of Current Events*. Begun by Dickens and edited by his father-in-law, the *Household Narrative* was the supplement to *Household Words* (“conducted by Charles Dickens”), and both journals were published at the same Wellington Street North Office. Peter Ackroyd has shown how Dickens regularly mined the *Household Narrative* as a source for his novels (59, 641-42).²² *Household Narrative* published one uncharacteristically lengthy and detailed account of “A Trial of an Extraordinary Character” in its August 1853 issue (183-84), and followed the case up with a report of the criminal trial’s exposure of the claimant as “Tom Provis” in April 1854 (87).

Moreover, the case seems to have been on Dickens’s mind at exactly the same time as he was writing *Great Expectations*. While touring the West Country with

Wilkie Collins, he wrote “A Message from the Sea” (1860).²³ A Christmas story written for *All The Year Round*, this tale both features forgery and refers (several times) to a man named Parvis, a surname not only evocative of Provis, but also indicative of how the Thomas Provis case naturally became transformed by Dickens’s literary imagination.

Although Magwitch is a far more sympathetic figure than Provis, there is certainly an approximate correspondence between the two. Both are “about sixty” (314), operated criminally ““in the provinces mostly”” (330), are associated with forgery, are sentenced to transportation, and die as prisoners in England.²⁴ But in Magwitch’s tale and those involved in it, Provis’s story subtly disperses and metamorphoses. The striking duality of Thomas Provis’s character is, arguably, developed through both Magwitch and Compeyson: Magwitch, Thomas Provis the rough, ill-educated, common and gaoled horse-thief; Compeyson, the gentleman poseur and document forger, who, like Thomas Provis in the guise of “Richard Hugh Smyth,” incorporates ““verses in his speech”” (351).²⁵ Moreover, while Thomas Provis believed that his second-hand bible could turn him into a wealthy gentleman (“A Trial of an Extraordinary Character” 183), Magwitch, the man who has, in Pip, actually created a gentleman of “spurious coin” (225), also relies on his bible as “a sort of legal spell or charm” (334).

A novel’s imagery is, of course, almost impossible to trace conclusively or exclusively. Provis, for instance, declared that his pigtail was congenital proof of his ancestry and of his entitlement to the Smyth fortune (Provis 6). May we see an allusion to it in the narrator’s description of Wemmick’s key to the safe in Jaggers’ office? Wemmick “produced [...] [the key] from his coat-collar like an iron pigtail” (199). This pigtail-like key chain grants Pip access to both a fortune and a

considerably elevated social status, precisely the outcomes that Provis had hoped to bring about through *his* pigtail. Or does the image simply originate in Marley's ghost ("A Christmas Carol" 57)? Perhaps the Provis pigtail prompted an allusion to the much earlier Christmas story. All we can say is that there *seem* to be fleeting reflections of the Provis case in *Great Expectations*. And yet, there are too many of these for mere coincidence. In a final twist, for instance, Pip nearly shares Provis's fate of being imprisoned owing to a London jeweller's account (462).²⁶ It is just possible that these residues of the Provis case are the novel's allusions to it. Leon Litvack has calculated that the name Provis appears sixty-four times in *Great Expectations* (127). It is not inconceivable that Dickens intended the contemporary reader to recall - in detail - the *cause célèbre* behind the Magwitch plot.

***Great Expectations*, Gothic identity, and forgery**

One of the most striking convergences of *Great Expectations* and the Thomas Provis case is their interest in forgery and Gothic identity.²⁷ Although Dickens's Gothic sensibilities were largely nurtured by his reading of Walter Scott and interest in popular melodrama,²⁸ *Great Expectations* conjures up most vividly the Gothic of Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein, or, the Modern Prometheus* (1818). Pip initially envisages his later relationship with Magwitch in terms that unequivocally direct the reader to Mary Shelley's novel:

The imaginary student pursued by the misshapen creature he had impiously made, was not more wretched than I, pursued by the creature who had made me, and recoiling from him with a stronger repulsion, the more he admired me and the fonder he was of me.²⁹ (339)

In chapter one, however, it is Magwitch who is clearly the monster. To young Pip's terror, Magwitch appears to materialise from the tombstones. Within the description

of this human encounter lies a textual one. The narrator's recollection that Magwitch was "torn by briars" (4) connects Magwitch to young Pip's experience of learning to read, in which each letter of the alphabet was "a bramble-bush" (44). In London, moreover, Pip tries to illuminate Magwitch's face by picking up "his reading lamp," the specific function of which, we are told, is "to shine upon a book" (314).

Magwitch's body is thus metaphorically inscribed as a Gothic text.³⁰

In Pip's first reading of Magwitch, young Pip is instructed by Magwitch's "terrible voice" (4) in the "fearful terms" (6) of the traditional Gothic. Magwitch initially threatens to cut his throat, and finally warns him not to "go from [his] words in any partickler [...] [or else his] heart and [his] liver shall be tore out, roasted and ate'" (ibid.). At issue in this primal encounter with Magwitch,³¹ is chapter one's very existence. Although the narrator wryly re-enacts the imagination of his young self in chapter one, he does so to dramatise and personify his more recent encounter with a classic Gothic muse, probably Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*, prior to writing the episode. Ostensibly, the main purpose of the *Frankenstein*-like tombstones, bleak landscape and monstrous figure, is to impress upon the reader the fact that young Pip was indeed "dreadfully frightened" (5) throughout the incident.

But *Great Expectations* later conceptualises chapter one's Gothic paraphernalia very differently, chiefly through one of the law's agents, Wemmick. His Walworth home directly refers to the gun Battery on the marshes (206), a place associated with the nascent text's encounter with the classic Gothic. Wemmick's house is characterised by "the queerest gothic windows (by far the greatest part of them sham) and a gothic door, almost too small to get in at" (ibid.). The reference to "gothic," albeit in an architectural sense, here associates chapter one's Gothic not only with structural narrowness, but also with the "sham," the counterfeit. Within this

building, Pip is shown “the pen with which a celebrated forgery had been committed” (209). Wemmick also takes Pip to Newgate to see a notorious coiner, the “Colonel,” before he is executed for forgery. The Colonel is described as having “a peculiar pallor overspreading the red in his complexion” (261), an image that vividly anticipates Magwitch’s powdered face, the appearance of which is said to resemble “rouge upon the dead” (338). In this visual echo, Magwitch, the novel’s emblem of the classic Gothic text, is identified with a convicted counterfeiter. The plot of *Great Expectations* is, in the words of the title of Peter Brooks’s important essay on the subject, essentially one of “Repetition, Repression, and Return.” In the reflexes I have just listed, the narrative re-views the Gothic of the first episode of *Great Expectations* through the lens of forgery.

Other narrative returns further suggest that chapter one’s Gothic devices constitute, as T. S. Eliot might have expressed it, an inauthentic objective correlative for young Pip’s genuine feelings of “terror” (4).³² First, in Mr. Pocket’s remark about “infants [being] nutcracked into their tombs” (194), chapter one’s tombstones are shown to be more appropriate to domestic comedy.³³ Second, the fearfulness of chapter one’s monstrous figure is deflated by the ironic tone of Pip’s comment that his “monster,” the “canary waistcoat[ed]” Avenger, “haunted [his] existence” (218). Third, the chapter’s archetypal Gothic sensations are ridiculed in Trabb’s boy’s “feign[ing] to be in a paroxysm of terror,” and in his crying out “I’m so frightened!” (245). Fourth, the reader’s proper reaction to chapter one’s classic Gothic is directed, retrospectively, through the account of Mr. Wopsle’s travesty of *Hamlet*. The scene in “the churchyard” (255) triggers the audience’s laughter; the ghost’s “terrors [are] received derisively” (253). In this multifaceted re-presentation of chapter one’s Gothic devices, the text seeks to conclude that they are, in themselves, now spurious

signifiers of “terror” (4). The imagery of forgery in *Great Expectations* is thus part of a wider questioning of the validity of a specific mode of Gothic representation.

Furthermore, the persistent and precise manner in which the narrative pursues this line of questioning is reminiscent of a counsel for the prosecution. This is a narrative strategy to be expected. *Great Expectations* is a novel obviously interested in the narrative mechanisms of trials.³⁴ Schramm implies, quite rightly, that Victorian authors generally presented their characters’ stories as if they were giving evidence to a jury (*Testimony and Advocacy* 142). She explains how Dickens, in particular, both knew and distrusted the implications of the Prisoners’ Counsel Act (109-21). For Dickens, she observes, defence counsels lacked integrity. Her view is certainly upheld by the anachronistic quality of Compeyson’s trial. According to Jerome Meckier’s chronology, Magwitch is sentenced for putting stolen notes into circulation (and other charges) in 1812 (qtd. in Litvack 102), twenty-four years before the Prisoners’ Counsel Act. Yet in Magwitch’s narrative, in chapter forty-two, “the counsellor for Compeyson” is called “the defence.”³⁵ This counsellor presents Compeyson’s story for him in such a way as to gain for him half of Magwitch’s sentence (350-51). The reader is envisaged as a jury member and asked to hear Magwitch’s story in his own words. Although Provis – unusually - told his own story at his criminal trial, too, it is perhaps safest to conclude that Dickens was simply fascinated by the idea of presenting arguments – even those concerned with literary form - within a quasi-legal framework, and that the Provis case was just one of many juridical influences on the narrative and figurative structures he used in *Great Expectations*. Nevertheless, the Provis case strongly linked, in a way that Dickens seems at some level to have understood, forgery and Gothic to the narrative forms of law and fiction.

For Mary Shelley, tombstones, charnel houses and a monster might well have conveyed sincere passions convincingly.³⁶ In *Great Expectations*, however, Dickens argues that these devices can now only parody the experience of fear. Young Pip's genuine feelings of "terror" (4) are, after all, gently mocked through the very apparatus that had, in *Frankenstein*, chiefly served to express and validate such feelings. The narrator's irony in chapter one suggests that he recognises that the objective correlative between classic Gothic devices and human fear is outmoded, but he nevertheless also tries to preserve a vestige of its efficacy. At one level, these *disiecta membra* of *Frankenstein* are indeed supposed to convey young Pip's heartfelt fear. But, in its re-visitation of chapter one's Gothic through the imagery of forgery, *Great Expectations* ultimately rejects this kind of ambiguous negotiation of the traditional Gothic. In short, *Great Expectations* elaborately insinuates that a Victorian author's use of *Frankenstein*-like imagery to portray authentic human feeling, however ambivalently or humorously, is analogous to creating and uttering a forgery.

Dickensian Gothic

But what could Dickens have gained by this conceptualisation of a particular kind of Gothic? Robert Mighall's work on Dickens's use of the Gothic in *Oliver Twist* and *Bleak House* perhaps sheds the most light on these narrative manoeuvres. Dickens, Mighall argues, wanted to create "a new Gothic, a new way to depict horrors, stripped of disguises and redundant stage properties" (42): a terrific urban realism, perhaps, in the service of socio-political good. A straightforward example of Dickens's "new Gothic" in *Great Expectations* may be found, for example, in Pip's first visit to London, when he and Herbert are "disgorged by an introductory passage into a

melancholy little square” (173). The city becomes in this image one monstrous organism in which human volition and happiness seem impossible. Gothic, for Dickens, appears to have been a tool for sociological analysis, a moral issue rather than a stylistic preference. *Great Expectations* utilised the forgery trials of Thomas Provis chiefly to help it define what Dickensian Gothic was not. It did so at a time when the Gothic seemed to have been skilfully absorbed and transmuted into the sensation novel as defined by *The Woman in White*.

This literary rivalry was perhaps to be expected. Dickens and Collins were friends and collaborators. Famously, Dickens had even offered to complete one of Collins’s serial numbers when Collins was too ill to do it himself (Ackroyd 268). *Great Expectations* was serialized soon after *The Woman in White* in *All The Year Round*. Dickens, Collins’s patron and editor, was the senior novelist under pressure from the talented junior whom he had inspired and mentored. Though his determination to compete with Collins on the common ground of the Gothic might well have been largely unconscious, the textual dynamics of *Great Expectations* suggests that it did indeed exist. Forgery gave Dickens in *Great Expectations* a way of recasting a decaying traditional genre – one that he had been transforming since the early days of his writing career - in a shape *other* than Collins’s sensationalism, one distinctively fashioned by his own imagination. Forgery enabled *Great Expectations* triumphantly to work through its anxiety about sensationalism’s highly successful, pioneering and alternative adaptation of the traditional Gothic.

3.2 Lady Ricketts and Orley Farm: Equivocating Over Sensationalism's Eroticism

Sensationalism was a literary phenomenon that few writers could afford to ignore in the early 1860s. Anthony Trollope, however, chose to address sensationalism in a very different manner from Dickens. Interwoven with *Orley Farm*'s interest in the feminism or the political radicalism of the female will-forger,³⁷ is the text's analysis of sensationalism, a potential threat to "straightforward, simple, plain storytelling" (*Dr. Thorne* 20), the style characteristic of the Trollope novel of the late 1850s.³⁸ Critical approaches that locate Lady Mason's crime within the context of *Orley Farm*'s relation to the sensation novel tend to conclude that Trollope merely "domesticates" this new style of novel-writing, turning it to another opportunity to address society's ills.³⁹

Sensationalist devices as such are indeed eschewed in *Orley Farm*. The anonymous reviewer of the *National Magazine* commented that, "a lady forger [...]" might well become a 'sensational' feature in other hands" (164). Structurally, Lady Mason's secret is more or less out in the opening chapter and, as P. D. Edwards observes, the three sub-plots cushion the sensationalist impact of the main plot (*Anthony Trollope* 107-08). Whereas Collins used number-ends to heighten suspense, Trollope, according to Mary Hamer, employed them in *Orley Farm* "to identify and highlight [...] minor ironies" (95). Trollope himself used *Orley Farm* to assert that a "good novel" ought to be both sensational and realistic (*Autobiography* 146). But Trollope did not, I hope to show, simply decide to jump on the sensation bandwagon and try to steer it towards Barsetshire.

Trollope and the case of Lady Ricketts

In the first place, it seems likely that the real-life inspiration for Lady Mason had, like Dickens's Gothic-centred response to sensationalism in *Great Expectations*, been germinating long before the appearance of *The Woman in White*. Trollope's aristocratic fictional female forger, I suggest, owes her existence, in part, to the real-life forgery case of Lady Ricketts, which occurred almost twenty years before *Orley Farm* was first published.⁴⁰ The case was detailed in the *Times* reports of 11 November 1842 ("Charge of Conspiracy and Forgery at Cheltenham") and 12 June 1843 ("Guildhall: Lady Ricketts Accused of Forgery"). Augustus Newton, a barrister, accused his mother-in-law, Rebecca Ricketts, of conspiring to forge the will of her recently deceased husband, Sir Robert Tristram Ricketts, an admiral. The charge was heard at the magistrates' court at Cheltenham in November 1842. According to Newton, Lady Ricketts, Mr. Straford (a solicitor), Mr. Wright (a surgeon), and Messrs. Buckman and Cousins (Mr. Straford's clerks) had together sought to defraud him and his wife, Laetitia Frances, the daughter of Sir Robert, of £60,000 of the deceased baronet's estate.

This troublesome son-in-law sought to portray Lady Ricketts as a devious and scheming woman, who, with the aid of the corrupt Mr. Wright, accelerated her husband's demise (while callously leading him to believe that he was recovering). The registrar of births and deaths examined the will, compared it with the copies, and declared that, "the signature 'R. T. Ricketts' is decidedly not in his handwriting." But, by complicated references to a range of signatures and repeatedly insisting that he believed the signature to be genuine, Lady Ricketts's counsel disputed this statement. The hearing came to "an abrupt conclusion" and the chairman of magistrates

announced, “‘It is the opinion of this Court, after the most mature consideration of all the evidence produced, that it does not warrant us to proceed any further, and that the case be dismissed’” (“Charge of Conspiracy and Forgery at Cheltenham”). Like Lady Mason in “The Great Orley Farm Case,” Lady Ricketts escaped being brought to trial for forgery. But, again like Lady Mason, the threat of a conviction for perjury hung over her many years later, in 1852.⁴¹

Orley Farm is adumbrated by the Lady Ricketts case.⁴² In both stories, a Lady’s son-in-law contests the validity of her deceased husband’s will, she herself is accused of forgery, and there is much fuss about the attestation of a baronet’s signature to a legal document.⁴³ Furthermore, Newton had, unsuccessfully, sought to show that the grand jury was persuaded to drop the case by the machinations of their foreman, who, Newton claimed, had been “moved by affection for his relative, Lady Ricketts.” In London, “Sir P. Laurie” interviewed the clerk to the magistrates at Cheltenham. Sir P. Laurie found Newton’s claim to be “perfectly ridiculous,” and “the subject was dropped” (“Guildhall: Lady Ricketts Accused of Forgery”). The foreman’s sentiments and Sir P. Laurie’s judgement come together in Sir Peregrine, who, believing Lady Mason to be innocent, offers to shield her - with his reputation, social position and money - from the terrifying accusation of forgery. In *Orley Farm*, we may also see how Lady Ricketts had little need to worry. Her virtual immunity from prosecution is perhaps explained in a remark made by Trollope’s worldly narrator: “no magistrate would commit such a person as Lady Mason” (1: 249). Whether knowingly or not, *Orley Farm* re-enacts significant aspects of this very unusual real-life story of a titled female will-forgery who had, conceivably, evaded exposure and punishment owing to her position and connections. In *The Times* reports

of the Lady Ricketts case and in Trollope's novel, will-forgery, gender, justice and class converge remarkably closely.

How likely is it that Trollope knew of the Lady Ricketts case? Lady Mason's kind of forgery was certainly relatively rare, largely for the reason that forging a will – compared with forging a signature on, say, a bill of exchange – was a complicated and difficult crime. As a leading article in *The Times* noted (5 Sept. 1843), will-forgery involves forging several signatures, "passing through the ordeal of the court of probate" and braving "repeated opportunities for exposure and detection before [the] property can be realized" ("Forged Wills"). The ingenuity and effrontery required for will-forgery made it a realistic and convincing way for an author to highlight a female character's amoral cleverness and remarkable determination.

From the beginning of 1840 to the end of 1862, according to *The Times* police and trial reports, only seven of the sixty-six women charged with forgery were charged with forging wills. Trollope's possible sources for Lady Mason were very few and concentrated in the early part of the 1840s, roughly the time of "The Great Orley Farm Case" (if we take the action of the novel as taking place around the time of writing). *The Times* reported the case substantially. In his discussion on the public attendance of trials in *Phineas Redux* (1874), Trollope advises the reader:

Upon the whole it may be better for you, perhaps, to stay at home and read the record of the affair as given in the next day's *Times*. Impartial reporters, judicious readers, and the able editors between them will preserve for you all the kernel, and will save you from the necessity of having to deal with the shell. (2: 224)

In the light of Trollope's praise for *The Times* trial reports here, it would be very surprising if he had not read those of the Lady Ricketts case.

Trollope was a Postal Surveyor's Clerk at Banagher in Ireland at the time of the Lady Ricketts hearing. Victoria Glendinning recounts how Trollope was often

invited to Coole Park, County Galway, by Sir William Gregory, MP for Dublin since 1842 and a contemporary of Trollope's at Harrow. At Coole Park, Glendinning records, Trollope "listened to the social and political gossip and did not forget it [...] What he heard could be filled in by reading the newspapers [...] It was the politics and the sexual scandals of the 1840s, when he knew almost no one, which were to be the starting-points for his fiction long after he left Ireland" (152). Lady Ricketts was the daughter of Richard Gumbleton of Ballyglasson or Castle Richard, County Waterford. He married Frances Anne Hamilton, the daughter of Charles Hamilton of Portglenone, County Antrim, in 1780. That Lady Ricketts had family among the Irish gentry makes it very likely that her forgery case was discussed at Coole Park.⁴⁴ So it appears that the time gap of almost twenty years between the Ricketts hearing and *Orley Farm* strengthens, rather than weakens, the argument that Lady Ricketts is a major inspiration for Lady Mason.⁴⁵

Furthermore, a detail in *The Kellys and the O'Kellys* (1848) illustrates how accusations of will-forgery by relatives who feel themselves to have been cheated of their rightful inheritance, and the notion of women as victims of male scheming, were conjoined in Trollope's literary consciousness in the 1840s. Martin Kelly plans to marry the unprepossessing (and now ailing) Anty Lynch, essentially for her money. Barry, Anty's drunken brother, entertains wild fantasies of how he might disrupt the Kellys' designs:

His heart sunk low within him; he became white, and his jaw dropped. After all, there were victory and triumph, plunder and wealth, *his* wealth, in the very hands of his enemies! Of course the Kellys would force her to make a will, if she didn't do it of her own accord; if not, they'd forge one. There was some comfort in that thought: he could at any rate contest the will, and swear that it was a forgery. (296)

In Barry Lynch's ramblings, we may find a trace of Augustus Newton's dubious attempt to prove a conspiracy to forge a will. The idea of a fictional Lady will-forger, meanwhile, bubbled away in Trollope's brain for years.

What might have kept it on the boil is the considerable litigation surrounding Sir Robert's estate, which continued until at least 1861.⁴⁶ Sir Robert's financial affairs had been ill thought out, whether by him personally or by his financial advisors. His will left his property to his widow and children, but excluded his daughter, Mrs. Laetitia Frances Newton. Sir Robert did not approve of her marriage, in 1828, to Augustus Newton ("Charge of Conspiracy and Forgery at Cheltenham"), and there had been no settlement. But in 1832, for whatever reason, he made a separate settlement for her, an investment of £2,000 in an annuities fund. On his death, the income from this fund was to be payable to her for life. In 1840, however, he made a will in which he believed he could revoke the 1832 settlement, and substitute for it a second deed. The trustees of Sir Robert's will – Joseph Thomas Straford and Thomas Askew – also thought that the deed of 1832 was revoked by the deed of 1840, and accordingly paid the dividends to Lady Ricketts. In 1845 Mrs. Newton and her children filed a bill, arguing that the deed of 1840 did not replace that of 1832. Although Sir Robert had not intended it to be so, the first deed was indeed still binding. Most of these details were reiterated or emerged in the Ricketts Trust case of April 1860 (*Re Ricketts Trusts 1 Johnson and Hemming 70, 70 ER 666*), a year after Lady Ricketts's death, and a couple of months before Trollope began writing *Orley Farm*. This timing could be coincidence, but the Lady Ricketts case was certainly one in which Trollope, with his lifelong fascination with the intricacies of wills and inheritance,⁴⁷ would surely have been interested.

The possible influence of “Sir P. Laurie” on *Orley Farm* further presses the likelihood that Trollope knew of the Lady Ricketts case. *The Times*’s reference to “Sir P. Laurie” is to Sir Peter Laurie (1778-1861), who had been knighted in 1824, chosen as alderman for the ward of Aldersgate in 1826, and elected lord mayor of London in 1832. Sir Peter Laurie also gained a reputation for being an effective and principled City magistrate (*DNB*).⁴⁸ According to James Grant’s *Portraits of Public Characters* (1841), Sir Peter was “remarkable for his honesty in all [...] relations of public life” (rpt. in Laurie 290). After his death in 1861, *The Times* wrote of how “Sir Peter was well known for his homely, brusque manner and his inflexible honesty of purpose,” and the journal also made reference to “his advanced age” (rpt. in Laurie 280). All these qualities characterise Sir Peregrine.

The obvious difference, however, is the contrast between Sir Peter’s widely publicised magisterial success with forgers and swindlers, and Sir Peregrine’s private embarrassment of being deceived by one.⁴⁹ According to Grant, Sir Peter was known for “the remarkable skill he displayed in his magisterial dealings with cunning rogues” (rpt. in Laurie 296) and “his singular quickness in detecting the most hidden points in human character” (*ibid.*). Sir Peregrine is similarly confident in his judgements of others: “[h]e, the baronet, was thoroughly convinced that Mr. Mason was the great sinner in this matter, and that he was prepared to harass an innocent and excellent lady from motives of disappointed cupidity and long-sustained malice, which made him seem in Sir Peregrine’s eyes a being almost too vile for humanity” (1: 257). Juxtaposing the two stories raises the obvious question: did Lady Ricketts mislead Sir Peter as Lady Mason did Sir Peregrine? If Trollope knew of Sir Peter (and considering Sir Peter’s public prominence, he surely must have), he would naturally

have been sensitive to the acute irony of the possible role that Sir Peter actually played in the Lady Ricketts case.

There was a well-established tradition of satirising Sir Peter. His decision to make an example of attempted suicides by sentencing them to imprisonment made him an object of derision in the 1840s. As Altick records (*Presence* 602-03), Sir Peter was gently mocked by Thackeray in his newspaper, *The National Standard*; he was attacked in *Punch*; his picture appeared in the *Illustrated London News*; and, in the character of Alderman Cute, he was derided in Dickens's Christmas story, "The Chimes" (1843).⁵⁰ Altick does not consider Sir Peter as an inspiration for Sir Peregrine. But Altick's scepticism towards Trollope's denials that he "deliberately introduced into his casts well-known politicians under other names" is well founded. Although Trollope would never have admitted it, he was probably one of the last satirists of Sir Peter.

Trollope seems to have been more even-handed than Dickens had been in "The Chimes." Just as duped as Sir Peregrine in *Orley Farm*,⁵¹ is the first Sir Joseph, who is the prime legal victim of Lady Mason's forgery. We hear little of this Sir Joseph, but his life-story charts Sir Peter's celebrated rise exactly: "Sir Joseph had been a London merchant; had made his own money, having commenced the world, no doubt, with half a crown; had become, in turn, alderman, mayor, and knight" (1: 1). Before he achieved precisely these last three honours, Sir Peter had reputedly started out life as a journeyman saddler, after which he ran a saddling business in London (*DNB*). It would not be surprising if Sir Peregrine and Sir Joseph were, to a degree, Trollope's imaginative and ironic transformations of Sir Peter Laurie (prompted, perhaps, by a lengthy *Times* leading article - on 2 November 1859 - in which Sir Peter was again gently derided). If so, then the forgery plot of *Orley Farm* implies

that Trollope knew of Sir Peter's involvement in the Ricketts case and, therefore, of the case itself.

So there are four main routes by which I believe Trollope knew the Ricketts case: his knowledge of Sir Peter Laurie and of the ongoing Ricketts trust litigation; his reading of *The Times*; and his conversations with Sir William Gregory in Ireland in the early 1840s. But the impact of the Lady Ricketts case on *Orley Farm* probably happened in 1860 chiefly because of its truly sensational nature: a possible aristocratic female forger, a conspiracy, an inheritance plot, a long-running family feud, a courtroom drama, and, later, not only a suspected poisoning, but also the prospect of the ghastly exhumation of Sir Robert Ricketts's body. For, soon after the failure of his attempt to prosecute Lady Ricketts, Augustus Newton petitioned for an inquest into the cause of his father-in-law's death. Newton sought to prove that Sir Robert's valet, John Cooke, had poisoned him. But the county coroner refused to exhume the body, sharing in the general conclusion that Newton had requested an exhumation simply "for the purpose of annoyance to the family" ("Charge of Poisoning the Late Sir R. T. Ricketts"). Before the Cheltenham magistrates, Newton did not acknowledge (until it was too late) that he was the complainant. Cooke was subsequently discharged. Though years old, the Lady Ricketts case must have had an irresistible generic topicality to a novelist in sensational 1860.

Lady Mason, sensationalism, and the reader

Although it was not until the mid-1860s that sensationalism became prevalent, it might, in the early 1860s, have appeared as *the* future form for the novel. It is reasonable to assume that almost all novelists were thinking along sensationalist lines

at this time. Certainly, the periodical press was. The *Cornhill Magazine*, in which *Orley Farm* was serialized between March 1861 and October 1862, told its readers in November 1862 how “Lady Mason’s position is of singular interest, thrilling some of the deeper chords in the heart” (158). Through its medical diction, the *Cornhill*’s notice proposes that *Orley Farm* could excite the reader’s cardio-vascular system. The *Cornhill* alludes to the “physical effect” on the reader, to “the thrill” that Margaret Oliphant had found in *The Woman in White* the preceding May (“Sensation Novels” 572). The *Cornhill* draws upon that which Alison Winter calls the “common [critical] pool of physiologically charged terms” associated with the sensation novel (324). The *Cornhill* had considerable commercial interests in Trollope,⁵² whose novels’ ability to wear current literary fashion had, for financial considerations, presumably to be advertised (however tenuous this claim might be).⁵³ Nevertheless, the review raises a neglected aspect of *Orley Farm*’s interest in the sensation novel: its *physical* relationship with the reader. An emotional, psychological or spiritual connection with the reader had long been the declared intention of a Trollope novel. But a physical relationship was something different, and for *Orley Farm*, exciting.

In his hugely influential article on *The Woman in White*, D. A. Miller argues that sensationalism’s stimulation of the body’s fibres and nervous tissue is to be identified with feminine sexuality and feminization (“*Cages aux folles*” 111-12). Interestingly, Lady Mason’s forgery of the codicil is chiefly distinguished from Glyde’s forgery of the parish register by both her gender and the text’s association of her crime with intense physicality. Recounting how, with her “own hands [...] during the night” (2: 46) she affected “the body of the will” (1: 3), Lady Mason describes how “her whole body was shaken with a tremour [*sic*]” (2: 45-46). Depicted in Lady Mason’s tremulous movements is that which Miller calls “the neuropathic body”

(111). Her precise memory of “dates and circumstances” (1: 120), her characteristic cleverness (1: 72), her “energy” and “flow of words” (2: 200), together with the overtly sensational nature of her crime, all figure the character of Lady Mason as the textual repository of the devices and features commonly associated with the sensational novel. She *personifies* it.

Sensationalism’s mystifying and tantalizing effects on the reader are traced out in *Orley Farm*, too. Lady Mason’s “character” (2: 230) is to be “read” (ibid.). Like the sensation novel, she withholds “private knowledge” (1: 118) and is thus a mechanism for keeping the other characters in suspense. Although it is her protectors Furnival and Sir Peregrine Orme who, for much of the novel, are the main interpreters of her character, the reader function is most explicitly figured in Felix Graham. The only reader of “the best new novels” (1: 298) in the text, and perhaps therefore of *The Woman in White* itself, he represents not only an exclusively male readership, but one placed in the carefully eroticised location of the bedroom. The narrator is strangely eager to point out that Lady Staveley cautions the maid against leaving Felix Graham’s bedroom door open for Madeline’s un-chaperoned access (1: 389-90). In spite of the *Cornhill*’s policy of primarily imagining a female readership (Turner 12), Trollope has a sexually knowing male reader, such as his own narrator, in mind for the latest fictional developments. As Nicola Thompson observes, Trollope can be viewed “as an intensely masculine writer directing himself toward a male audience” (151). Within *Orley Farm*, new novels, male readers and sexuality are the context for Lady Mason’s readability as the sensation novel.

The reader of *Orley Farm*, however, chiefly reads of other characters reading Lady Mason. R. D. McMaster is quite right to draw attention to how Furnival is struck by “the awesome sexual power” of Lady Mason (47), a power largely generated by

the crime that he suspects her of having committed. Gazing at his reflection in a railway carriage, Furnival thinks longingly of Lady Mason. The narrator imagines a “[y]oung man” sitting opposite Furnival (and addresses him, in avuncular fashion, “young friend of mine”) (1: 264). The narrator observes that it would be a mistake for this “[y]oung man” to conclude that “the sap of sentiment has been squeezed” out of Furnival “by the rubbing and friction of years” (1: 265). According to Nicholas Daly, the railway explicitly evokes and links both sexuality and the stimulating effects of the sensation novel.⁵⁴ The erotically charged language surrounding Furnival here,⁵⁵ with its evocation of sexual rhythms and fluids, is paralleled by the description of Sir Peregrine Orme and Lady Mason that almost immediately follows it:

Sir Peregrine, with his own old eyes full of salt water, hardly knew that she was weeping. But gradually the drops fell upon his hand, one by one at first, and then faster and faster; and soon there came a low sob all but suppressed, but which at last forced itself forth, and then her head fell upon his shoulder [...] his vacant arm passed itself round her waist. (1: 267)

These are more than moments of sentiment. Through the reactions of Furnival and Orme to Lady Mason, *Orley Farm* tentatively explores the potentially erotic and feminising effects of the sensation novel on the male reader’s body.

While the sensation novel reader’s “hystericized bod[y]” – the feminised subject position that D. A. Miller argues is “caught” from reading a sensation novel (108-12) - is depicted in Orme and Furnival’s responses to Lady Mason, the reader of Trollope’s text experiences little of the suspense that Miller sees as being the prerequisite for the “hystericiz[ation]” (108) of the reader’s body. He or she deduces Lady Mason’s guilt almost certainly in the opening chapter and therefore is safely insulated from sensationalism’s effects. The sensation novel hypothesised in Lady Mason is thus contained and explored within, to use an adjective that appeared in an unsigned review in the *Examiner*, the text’s own “manly” confines (155), the

recording gaze of the anti-sensational male narrator. Instead of a direct experience of the sensation novel, *Orley Farm* offers to the readership of the *Cornhill* a sensation effect by proxy and the opportunity to view the physiological effects of sensationalism on fictional human bodies.

Forgery therefore gave the Trollope novel a more sophisticated set of textual dynamics, one revolving around its fascination with the reader's response. The forgery case of Lady Ricketts raised a textual anxiety – the possibility of the traditional Barsetshire-style Trollope novel having a sensational and feminising physiological connection with the reader - that is skilfully managed by the text. *Orley Farm* internally embraces a sensationalist ethos, but keeps the reader safe from any of the traumatic nervous excitement associated with it. The genteel, comfortable, and established Trollopean author-reader relationship survived sensationalism intact in *Orley Farm*.

3.3 Fragments of Forgers: Wylder's Hand's Supernaturalising of Sensationalism

Like Dickens and Trollope, Sheridan Le Fanu had a profoundly ambiguous relation to sensation fiction. In his "Preliminary Word" to *Uncle Silas* (1864), Le Fanu asked if he might say "a few words of remonstrance against the promiscuous application of the term 'sensation' to that large school of fiction which transgresses no one of those canons of construction and morality which, in producing the unapproachable 'Waverley Novels,' their great author imposed upon himself?" (3). As Victor Sage observes (Introduction xi), Le Fanu sought from his readers a cerebral and literary

appreciation of his work, rather than a quickening of the nerves. His professed attitude towards his novels' relation to sensation fiction is, in this respect, similar to that displayed by Trollope in his *Autobiography* (146-48). But Le Fanu was, of course, a very different kind of writer from Trollope. Le Fanu's fiction explored, with remarkable sophistication, such wide-ranging subjects as the cultural and political legacy of the Protestant Ascendancy in Ireland, individual psychology, gender, spiritualism, and the supernatural.⁵⁶ But, as Sage says, "[t]he sensation label stuck, and it meant that *Uncle Silas* [...] was never long out of print" (xiii). For Le Fanu, sensationalism proved a lucrative lodging for his uniquely Anglo-Irish Gothicisms.

***Wylder's Hand* and the ambiguity of its national affiliations**

Wylder's Hand was published in England, in novel-form, in the same year as *Uncle Silas*. Originally, it was serialized in the *Dublin University Magazine* from June 1863 to February 1864 (McCormack, *Le Fanu* 199). The plot, narrated by Charles de Cresseron, concerns the mysterious disappearance of Mark Wylder of Brandon Hall, Gylingden. Close to the date of his intended marriage to Dorcas Brandon, his cousin, it becomes known through a series of letters – apparently written in his hand - that Mark Wylder has had to leave on urgent business. Wylder's return is continually postponed, the marriage engagement is broken off and, it seems, he is in some sort of trouble, reluctantly travelling from one European destination to another. The letters hint that he has been kidnapped. As in E. S. Dallas's description of the archetypal sensation novel, "[t]here is a secret, [...] a crime, to be discovered" (Rev. of *Lady Audley's Secret* 129).

Wylder's lawyer, Larkin, certainly has good reason to suspect foul play. One of Wylder's letters refers to a letter that should already have arrived, but when this

missing letter arrives, its composition date is after the first letter. Larkin deduces from this anomaly that Wylder's letters, sent over several months, have been written in advance, then dated and posted later. Larkin's chief suspect is the calculating and deceitful Captain Stanley Lake, for whom Dorcas has bizarrely declared her love (to Lake's sister, Rachel). For purely financial reasons and with Wylder's engagement to Dorcas now dissolved, Lake marries Dorcas. Towards the close of the novel, Lake, an election candidate now, is mortally injured when his horse rears up by an earth bank. Uncannily, the accident leads to the discovery of the physical hand of Mark Wylder, sticking up from the earth. But Larkin has recently seen Wylder alive. Who was the dead man?

It transpires that some time ago Lake had challenged Wylder to a duel over Dorcas, stabbed him in self-defence, buried his body in the earth, and sustained the illusion that he was alive by forging the letters. These were then posted around Europe, on pre-arranged dates, by a manservant, James Dutton. Under Lake's instruction, Dutton had also impersonated Wylder. It turns out that Lake had to go to such lengths to give the impression that Mark Wylder was still alive so that his wife, Dorcas, who knew nothing of his machinations, could keep the Wylder estates. If Wylder were known to be dead, these would, owing to an obscure clause in the family will, revert to Wylder's brother, William, and Lake would, of course, be reduced to his former state of impoverishment. The plan, which enabled Lake to make it seem as though he had been entrusted with Wylder's finances, also gave him direct access to Wylder's fortune.⁵⁷ In this sense at least, Lake's letter forgeries are felonious.

Le Fanu's inspiration for his central plot of forgery seems to have stemmed from a variety of real-life influences (together with one fictional one). Le Fanu's publisher, Richard Bentley, had, in a letter dated 26 February 1863, directed Le Fanu

to write “the story of an English subject and in modern times” (qtd. in McCormack, *Le Fanu* 140). As Rance points out, Bentley wanted to turn Le Fanu, who had already distinguished himself as a master of plot and suspense, into a writer to rival Collins or Braddon (158, 165-66). The reference to *The Times* (2: 72-73) in *Wylder’s Hand* suggests that Le Fanu, from Dublin, was indeed scrutinising the English newspapers for the sort of material requested by Bentley.

In *Wylder’s Hand*, Le Fanu seems not only to have given his story a Derbyshire setting,⁵⁸ but also featured an election candidate inspired by an English forger. From August 1862 to July 1863, the will-forgeries of the MP William Roupell, who had in 1857 been accused of bribing his Lambeth electors, were reported extensively in *The Times*.⁵⁹ Lake’s forgeries, together with his parliamentary ambitions and corrupt canvassing practices, are dominant narrative strands in Le Fanu’s novel. Both Roupell and Lake are described as knowing alarmingly little about politics.⁶⁰ Moreover, the minor character, “good-natured old Mrs. Muggeridge” (1: 284), may be an allusion to Roupell’s old servant, Muggeridge, who had unwittingly facilitated Roupell’s forgeries and whose name was certainly prominent in *The Times* report of 20 August 1862.

But the idea of the forger MP, though probably prompted by the Roupell case, might just as easily have taken its shape from a forger closer to Le Fanu’s home: John Sadleir. McCormack notes that this other forger-MP had stood, successfully, as an electoral candidate for Carlow Town at the same time as Le Fanu had sought, unsuccessfully, nomination as the Tory candidate for Carlow County (*Le Fanu* 215). McCormack detects some of Sadleir’s characteristics in Mr. Justice Harbottle (ibid.), the eponymous protagonist of a short story published in January 1872, in *Belgravia*.⁶¹ It therefore also seems likely that the seven-year-old story of Sadleir’s crimes,

perhaps fleshed out with Le Fanu's own experience of electioneering, lay behind these traces of Roupelliana. An up-to-the-minute English subject was perhaps thus subtly transferred to the Anglo-Irish context with which Le Fanu evidently felt most comfortable as a writer.⁶²

An Irish theme also ran through the Thomas Provis trials of 1853 and 1854. As we have seen, Thomas Provis had, by various forgeries, claimed to be the son of Sir Hugh Smyth, who had (Provis claimed) married secretly in 1797 near Bandon, County Cork. One of the Provis case's distinguishing features was a ring (faked to "prove" Provis's Smyth lineage) with a Latin motto. *Wylder's Hand* also concentrates on a ring (with a fake stone) and a Latin motto: the Persian ring and the Wylder family motto of "*Resurgam*." These prominent textual details, together with the echo of Bandon in Brandon Hall, might suggest that the Provis case was a possible, albeit oblique, influence on *Wylder's Hand*. Taking into account the fact that Le Fanu's mother's family were from Cork (McCormack, *Le Fanu* 2), and the general fascination with the minutiae of Irish history evident in Le Fanu's fiction, it seems probable that Le Fanu had at least heard of the case.⁶³ Provis is a threshold figure in *Wylder's Hand*, haunting the edges of its narrative. In Captain Lake's associating forgery with personation, for instance, we may see the image of Provis's own villainous attempts at forgery and personation.

But personation was a remarkably common device in the novel during this period. Captain Lake's management of Dutton's personation of Wylder resembles, above all other examples, Captain Wragge's extensive tuition of Magdalen Vanstone in the art of personation in Wilkie Collins's *No Name*. Appearing between 15 March 1862 and 17 January 1863, Collins's novel "had very extensive library sales and as a result was virtually sold out on the first day of issue" (Blain, "Note on the Text" xxii).

Under pressure by Bentley to turn his hand to English sensation fiction, Le Fanu would probably have read *No Name*.⁶⁴ Although Le Fanu is no mere copier of Collins's sensationalist tricks, there are references to a madhouse and a ghost-like madman in white in *Wylder's Hand*. Le Fanu's forger's activities, in a number of important respects, are remarkably similar to those of Collins's Captain Wragge. Months before Le Fanu's Captain Lake gave instructions for a forged letter to be posted *from* Switzerland, Collins's forger, Captain Wragge, had "posted [a] forged letter" *to* Switzerland (*No Name* 437). Virginia Blain, moreover, in her notes to pages seven and four hundred and thirty-three, explains that Collins scrupulously checked the time it took a letter to reach England from Zurich, as well as the exact days on which particular dates fell. Dates of international letters are similarly crucial to the plot of *Wylder's Hand*. Although it is highly probable that several real-life forgers directed Le Fanu's forgery plot, it appears to have been energised chiefly by Collins's fictional forger.

The skill and thrill of forgery

Formed from such murky origins, *Wylder's Hand*'s fictional forger, Captain Stanley Lake, celebrates forgery as a cleverly creative enterprise. Although the letters purportedly written by Wylder are forgeries of Wylder's handwriting, they largely constitute Wylder's identity in the novel, until they are eventually exposed as forgeries to both Larkin and the novel's reader. There is little that is slavishly imitative in Lake's forgeries. In *Lucretia*, *The Forgery*, *Ruth*, and *David Copperfield*, forgery was, in various closely defined ways, associated with some form of fraudulent

representation. By contrast, forgery in *Wylder's Hand* expresses the authorial pleasure of inventing and sustaining a credible character on paper.

In his heroic plotting, Lake is a typical sensation villain. He is the man who, in E. S. Dallas's critique of the genre in *The Gay Science* (1866), is the "one character, who, in violent contrast to all the others, is superior to the plot [and] plans the events [...] He predominates over the plot" (136-37). Lake is powerfully aware of his centrality. Half way through the novel, he remarks in a letter, speaking as though he were Wylder, "I am running this queer rig, masquerading, hiding, and dodging, like a runaway forger" (2: 162). Given Lake's later reluctance to confess his crimes, the simile of the "runaway forger" (a phrase suggesting that the forger is revelling in his crime and cannot stop committing it) is less a confession, whether accidental or otherwise, than a bold statement of narrative control. Lake gloatingly gives, to the man whom he suspects is about to trap him, a cryptic clue as to the secret of the mysterious letters: that they are forgeries. Lake's clue is perhaps offered to the novel's readers just as it is to Larkin: with the sublime self-assurance of its own impenetrability.

Such textual braggadocio appears to have been justified. "The mystery is very cleverly kept up," remarked the *Athenaeum* in its review of the novel, and implied that "the author's secret" could not be cracked. Nelson Browne's more recent critical position is similar: "There is not the slightest hint to enable the reader to solve the puzzle for himself" (42). And yet there is. Charles de Cresseron's personification of the letter at the beginning of the novel focuses the reader's attention on the significance of recognising handwriting: "The handwriting I knew as one sometimes knows a face" (1: 6). Throughout the novel, there are numerous references to penmanship, stationery and authenticating seals. This is evidently a novel in which

letters and personal handwriting styles demand scrutiny. Within this calligraphically sensitive text, Wylder's script is suspiciously described as "irregular" (1: 201).

The idea of resurrection as a concept *cryptically* understood is everywhere in the novel, too. Repeated references to the Wylder family motto – "*Resurgam*" – and its echo in the Persian motto within the ring "I will come up again" – are reinforced by mad uncle Lorne's appearance in the guise of the long-dead Sir Lorne Brandon (1: 43-45). The sentence "Wylder was hidden from mortal sight" (1: 243) cryptically suggests both his death and apparent presence within the world. Lake, bathing his sister's face with eau de cologne, is described as having the look of "a familiar of the Holy Office, bringing a victim back to consciousness" (1: 188). Together, these clues subtly suggest that Wylder is dead and that the characteristically scheming Lake has somehow brought him back to life. Rachel tells Tamar that "[t]he dead themselves declare their dreadful secrets" (2: 39). Through the medium of Lake's "runaway forger" simile, of course, Wylder may indeed be seen to have done so.

The hints do not stop there. Lake's near-fatal wounding in a duel (2: 117) alludes to the precise circumstances of Wylder's death. Later, the narrator receives an invitation to Brandon Hall and muses that, "though penned by Captain Lake, [it] came in reality from his beautiful young bride" (2: 242). Again, the notion of one person's characteristic script being governed by the consciousness of another is introduced into the narrative. This clue-trail might represent the sporadic and inadvertent surfacing of de Cresseron's knowledge of the solution to the mystery prior to his recounting the story in print. Or we could be witnessing Le Fanu's mind at work, subliminally marking the steps towards the denouement that he had long envisaged.

But the sheer number of clues evokes, rather, Le Fanu's conscious narrative bravado. Forgery in *Wylder's Hand* is used to parade the author's suspense-making

skill by recklessly risking its undoing, clue-by-clue, in a tell-tale simile placed at mid-point in the novel. Le Fanu too is the amorally clever forger, writing Lake's letters as though they were Wylder's, "run away" with the success of his own literary craftsmanship, and subsuming in it any reservations about the artifice involved in creating fictional character or plot. For most of the novel, Larkin, like most of *Wylder's Hand's* readers, accepts Wylder's letters as being genuinely from Wylder. Only the forger himself exposes them, right at the end, with Le Fanu, as forgeries. This revelation, properly, is Le Fanu's artistic triumph.

Forgery and sensational supernaturalism

This assumed victory over the reader's intelligence is mediated through the supernaturalism for which Le Fanu is chiefly known.⁶⁵ The "sheaf of [forged] letters" is stylised as "a thing to conjure with"; it contains "spells" which might "command the spirits" (2: 276).⁶⁶ The moment of these letters' exposure as forgeries, moreover, is symbolised by the gothic image of Wylder's "livid hand, rising from the earth" (3: 267). Wylder's hand is a visual pun, pointing to his forged handwriting. The literary origins of this image, it seems, lay in a chapter from Le Fanu's *The House By the Churchyard* (1863), entitled "Some Odd Facts About the Tiled House – Being An Authentic Narrative of the Ghost of a Hand," in which a disembodied hand commits a murder (53-58).⁶⁷ In *Wylder's Hand*, Le Fanu appears to have grafted the supernatural aura of this hand onto Wylder's hand.⁶⁸ Both hands make an appearance independent of their owners. The *Churchyard* chapter's vocabulary of "authentic" (54) and "fraud" (55), moreover, further suggests a subtle lexical movement from the tale of a ghostly hand to a novel featuring a physical hand, handwriting and forgery.

The idea of forgery, more than any other plot detail, facilitated a smooth transition from the folkloric Irish supernaturalism of *The House by the Churchyard* (1863) to the thinly anglicised, reluctantly modern, and wittily sensationalised *Wylder's Hand* (1864). Wylder's hand – the script that purports to be Wylder's – is the ghost of Wylder's handwriting, expertly conjured up by Lake in the act of forgery. Like the disembodied hand in the *Churchyard* chapter, Wylder's ghostly hand – the apparent handwriting of a dead man – operates in society just as though the man were alive, as Lake's financial enrichment illustrates.⁶⁹ Le Fanu's presentation of forgery enabled him not only to comply with Bentley's request for him to compete on similar artistic terms with Collins, but also to retain the supernatural style that he clearly loved most.⁷⁰ The *Athenaeum* praised *Wylder's Hand* for its qualities of “ghostly awe,” and Le Fanu himself for his “touches of imagination” and “faculty for graphic description.” For his achievement in finely embellishing a sensational plot with supernatural imagery, while managing to avoid the supernatural itself, Le Fanu is to some extent indebted to the real-life forgers Roupell, Sadleir and, perhaps, Provis. They provided him with a sensational crime that was robustly real, and yet – of its very nature – weirdly phantasmal.

3.4 The Knock-On Effect of Real-Life Forgery: Madeleine Graham's Rewriting of Madeleine Smith as a Forger

In this section of the chapter, I extend my argument to its limit by examining an example of the knock-on effect of real-life forgers on Victorian fiction. The influence of a fictional forger on *Wylder's Hand*, Captain Wragge, is instructive. Fictional

forgers, especially the likes of Sir Percival Glyde and Lady Mason, could exert just as powerful a pressure on the development of fiction as the real-life forgers who had inspired their own existence. To fake her own death (as Mrs. Helen Talboys), the eponymous heroine of *Lady Audley's Secret* conspires in the forgery of a tombstone at Ventnor.⁷¹ It seems very likely that this detail owes much to Sir Percival's attempt in *The Woman in White* (1859-60) to secure the fiction of Laura's death with a forged tombstone, a motif which itself may be traced back to the real-life forgeries of Alexander Alexander and Mathew J. Tracy. Fictional forgers who appear to be independent of a real-life original were, nevertheless, touched by the general literary culture created by real-life forgers.

Emma Robinson, M. E. Braddon, and the two Madeleines

One of the most fascinating instances of this kind of indirect influence occurred in *Madeleine Graham* (1864), by Emma Robinson (1814-90).⁷² The daughter of an Oxford Street bookseller, Emma Robinson was a successful novelist at thirty. Her literary reputation rests on *Whitefriars; or the Court of Charles II* (1844) “and other historical novels of the Harrison Ainsworth breed” (*London Literary Budget* 5 July 1862, qtd. in Allibone 2: 1836).⁷³ One of these, *Caesar Borgia*, was serialised in *Ainsworth's Magazine* in 1845 (Summers 48). In May of the following year, Ainsworth wrote to Horace Smith that, “Colburn [the publisher] is in a rage, I'm told, at my letting the world know that the author of 'Caesar Borgia' is a naughty young lady, who ought to be shut up for her improprieties” (qtd. in Summers 48). But not everyone knew the identity of this headstrong and talented young woman. In the *Athenaeum*, the reviewer of *The Gold-Worshippers* (1851) wrote, “The well-known

power of the author of ‘Whitefriars’ has not deserted him [*sic*] on his entering the world we live in [...]”⁷⁴ The novel drew on the story of George Hudson, “The Railway King.” Anonymous publication clearly enabled Robinson, at this time, to be credited for discussing topical subjects with manly “power” (*ibid.*). In 1862, she received a Civil List pension of £75 per annum, “a distinction,” noted the *Athenaeum*, now apprised of her gender, “which her literary works very well deserve” (“Emma Robinson”).⁷⁵ The year after, she wrote an epithalamion for the Prince and Princess of Wales. Her file at the Royal Literary Fund archive tells a sad story of slow financial, physical and artistic decline from the 1860s onwards. She made four applications for assistance from the RLF, each more desperate than the last, in 1861, 1867, 1887 and 1889. (All were successful.) Emma Robinson ended her days – penniless - in Hanwell County Lunatic Asylum, London (“Robinson, Emma”). Like a heroine in a sensation novel, she was indeed eventually “shut up for her improprieties.”⁷⁶

One wonders what her friend Mary Elizabeth Braddon’s views were on this incarceration.⁷⁷ Braddon had helped Emma Robinson in the past. In 1866 she wrote to Bulwer-Lytton to secure an increase in her Civil List pension. In these letters, Braddon is warm and affectionate about Robinson, calling her, her “dear & noble minded friend” (Wolff, “Devoted Disciple” 137). Braddon appears to have been a visitor to the “dear little box of a house in St. John’s Wood,” where Robinson “live[d] with her father & sister” (*ibid.*). In one of her letters to Bulwer-Lytton, she enclosed a letter sent to her by Robinson, “written on the occasion of the death of a brother” and “private in its nature” (*ibid.*). Braddon and Robinson were very close.⁷⁸ Robinson is presented to Bulwer-Lytton as the author of novels “that required much historical research – patient plodding through Latin M.S.S. & all sorts of work which I look on

with wonder” (ibid.). This is Emma Robinson “the Author of Whitefriars” (ibid.), the writer of historical romances, rather than of *The Gold-Worshippers*.

What Braddon does not celebrate in her letters to Bulwer-Lytton is Emma Robinson’s recent prominence as an author of cheap railway fiction.⁷⁹ To paint Robinson as a trashy novelist would, Braddon presumably thought, do little to advance Robinson’s cause with Bulwer-Lytton.⁸⁰ Yet the strongest literary sign of Emma Robinson’s regard for her advocate is *Madeleine Graham* (1864), a sensation novel in the *Lady Audley’s Secret* mould. The surname of Robinson’s heroine is, of course, the same as the fictitious one that Lady Audley adopts when, after having discarded her legal identity as Mrs. Talboys, she becomes Lucy Graham, governess to Mr. Dawson’s daughters. Both novels feature callous young women who scheme for wealth and status, and who attempt to murder inconvenient lovers. At one level, the novels are wry responses to the 1857 Act for Divorce and Matrimonial Causes. The Act, and the cases it occasioned, brought marital incompatibility into public scrutiny. It also showed how the business of getting rid of a spouse was still more difficult for women than for men.⁸¹ More generally, however, both novels warn of the deleterious effects on society if women are imprisoned in a state of “senseless infancy” (18).⁸² Both also caution against the malign influence of modern French novels.⁸³

Like Lady Audley, Robinson’s Miss Graham is a genteel young woman who avidly reads these French romances. Guided by her French schoolteacher, Mlle. Loriôt (an ex-forgery), Madeleine plots to entrap a rich - but middle-aged, balding and divorced - businessman (George Behringbright) into marriage. As part of one of her many schemes, Madeleine forges a postscript to a letter. By this time, she is also having an affair with a poor, handsome, young Frenchman, Camille Le Tellier, to whom she writes several love letters. Composed in the racy style of the modern

French romances that she has read, these letters later prove compromising to her.

Madeleine subsequently tries to retrieve the letters and to poison Camille with arsenic.

He survives, as a decrepit invalid, and she is pressurized into marrying him by

Behringbright's threats of the law and conditional offer of financial support.

Behringbright, meanwhile, has found his true love in the shape of Emily Maughan, an

honest young governess. As in *Lady Audley's Secret*, the feminist protest is integrated

into a hollow conservative ending.⁸⁴

The *Athenaeum* grumbled that *Madeleine Graham* was "based on the story of Madeleine Smith: her antecedents and adventures as they came out upon the trial manufactured into a romance." Madeleine Smith was a Glasgow banker's daughter who stood trial for poisoning her lover, Émile L'Angelier, in 1857. (L'Angelier, a shipping clerk whom she had met in 1855, originally came from Jersey.) They conducted a clandestine relationship, and Madeleine wrote love letters to him with a frank sexual content. Not long after this affair began, however, William Minnoch, a wealthy friend of the Smith family, began openly courting her. As Minnoch became Madeleine's fiancé, she tried to end the affair with Émile. But Émile refused to return the compromising letters that she had written to him. The prosecution argued that she had poisoned Émile to get rid of him; the defence contended that he had committed suicide. The prosecution could prove that she had bought lethal quantities of poison on several occasions, but the criminal intent behind these purchases was difficult to establish, as was the timing of when she could have seen Émile to administer the poison. The verdict, peculiar to Scots law, was "Not Proven." The sensational nature of the case, however, largely lay in Madeleine's explicit letters to Émile. As Randa Helfield (163-70) and Barbara Leckie (52-53) discuss, many newspapers presented Madeleine as the victim of French immoral influence, both in the form of Émile

himself and the French novels from which, it was alleged, she had acquired her scandalous and un-English (or un-Scottish) mores.⁸⁵

This was the main point on which Emma Robinson said that she had engaged with the trial. On 15 March 1864, she wrote a letter to the *Athenaeum*, in which she denied the journal's accusation that she had "adopted [this] recent celebrated criminal trial in Scotland as the foundation of [her] story on purely 'sensational' principles." She had intended, she said, "to expose the pernicious consequence of the universal spread and reception of French ideas and motive agencies in our literature."⁸⁶ The letter was a public defence that, in its declared ethical aims, echoed Bulwer-Lytton's "A Word to the Public."⁸⁷ Though conceived on a more modest scale, it was perhaps just as necessary. Far more vociferously than the *Athenaeum*, the *Saturday Review* had compared *Madeleine Graham* itself to "the works of the most noxious of French novelists [...]" In particular, the *Saturday* disputed the novel's presumption that many girls would "carr[y] on guilty intrigues with handsome men, and, to marry a rich husband, would not flinch from theft, lying, forgery, or murder" (331). These two respectable middle-class journals clearly saw *Madeleine Graham* – a sensation novel written by an established novelist now widely known to be a woman – as part of the infectious disease of French literary culture, rather than its English cure. For them, author and novel constituted, in Lyn Pykett's phrase, "the improper feminine."⁸⁸

Forgery where there was none

According to the *Saturday Review*, Robinson's novel had introduced forgery as a crime that girls like Madeleine Smith *might* commit. Madeleine Smith did not, in fact, commit forgery of any kind. So what were Robinson's motives for rewriting

Madeleine Smith as a forger? What were the literary consequences of this decision?

Amidst the minute detail in which *Madeleine Graham* generally follows the Smith trial,⁸⁹ the novel's references to forgery are strangely obtrusive. Behringbright jokes that Vivian Fauntleroy, an urbane, witty and impoverished writer, “boasts that he can imitate a handwriting so well that he hopes he shall never come across a blank chequebook of mine, or it will, he fears, bring him to grief [...]” (86). (Vivian's namesake, Henry Fauntleroy, was hanged for forging powers of attorney in 1824.) Suspiciously, we later learn that Vivian lives off IOUs. What Vivian has just done, however, is copy a letter from memory just before Behringbright burned it. This letter, ostensibly a promise of information about Behringbright's current amour, “Incognita,” had been written by Mlle. Loriôt. Her purpose was to bait Behringbright into coming to the opera, where he would, apparently by accident, meet Madeleine. Mlle. Loriôt's plot is exposed when Vivian's masterful copy deceives her into admitting, before a detective that Behringbright has hired, that it was she who had written this letter. By this stage in the story, moreover, we know that Mlle. Loriôt was once imprisoned for forgery at St. Lazare, Paris. Of her arrest, she says to Madeleine, “the agent of the police surprise[d] [me], with his detestable accusation of me as a person who has forged letters” (53). The forgeries were, it seems, part of an earlier plan to entrap a young nobleman into marriage. Vivian Fauntleroy, who can expertly copy handwriting, and who therefore might (or might not) be a forger, copies a letter to unmask a deception that hinges on a letter, originally written by an ex-forgery, that is, if anything, now a forgery of her own handwriting! Forgery is an important part of Robinson's novel.

Structurally, the purpose behind this extravagant episode is to foreshadow Madeleine's own forgery. Devised chiefly as a detail to vex Emily Maughan,⁹⁰

Madeleine's forgery comprises the addition of a postscript to a letter, which effectively reverses what the letter says. The act is presented as an "almost" unconscious criminal transgression (one psychologically prepared for, we are earlier led to suspect, by French influences):

She tried her hand, almost without thinking of what she was doing, at an imitation of Lady Glengariff's peculiarly tremulous and separated but distinct and characteristic caligraphy [*sic*] – found with a little practice, she could produce almost a facsimile – practised about half an hour, and she added a postscript to her ladyship's letter, which in her opinion ought to have filled up a blank which remained at the bottom of the last page of the paper. (261-62)

For Madeleine, forgery is an act both creative and corrective, a fortuitous literary eradication of that which she finds inconvenient in real life. It is a childishly malicious letter-game (one that Wilkie Collins poisoning heroine, Lydia Gwilt, was later to play in *Armada* [1866]).

Madeleine's forgery is not only presented as a deceitful intervention in someone's private life, but also, via Vivian, it is allusively associated with Henry Fauntleroy's execution. Madeleine knows that her interception and forgery of the letter constitutes a felony: "Madeleine had an indistinct impression that to open another person's letter, knowingly and wilfully, was somehow or other very seriously punishable at law" (260). Providing that private letters contain nothing that could be construed as legal documentation, they do not count as instruments that, if forged, warrant a charge of forgery. But stealing or secreting a posted letter was a felony (7 Wm. IV. & 1 Vict. c. 36; 3 & 4 Vict. c. 76, s. 30.), albeit one far less serious than forgery. Robinson seems to have been interested in forgery less as a statutory felony than as a quasi-criminal mode of behaviour.

Madeleine's forgery symbolises her fraudulent character. At one point in the novel, the narrator gives a definition of metonymy: "by which places and things are put for others" (95). This interjection suggests Robinson's awareness of forgery's

metonymic usefulness. “Most decidedly,” we are later informed, “Madeleine had conceived of no passion, however well she might counterfeit one, for Mr. Behringbright [...] [I]t was all false, simulated, counterfeit” (292). This language of forgery clearly associates deceitfulness in love with conceptions of forgery in law. Madeleine herself appreciates how Emily Maughan’s truthfulness has inspired genuine love and passion. Madeleine recognises that all she has achieved in human relations, by contrast, are the “miserable successes of artifice and coquetry” (261). Her forgery, which is described on the same page as this realisation, primarily stylises her insincerity as a lover. According to the virtuous Emily Maughan, if a woman marries a man whom she does not love, it is “*prostitution*” (163). The harshness of the forgery metaphor is thus quite in keeping with the novel’s dominant view of what should constitute a good marriage.

As well as using forgery as a metaphor for deceit in love, *Madeleine Graham* also employs it to express a concern about the possible consequences of admitting private letters as legal evidence. Lord Handyside justified the admission of Madeleine Smith’s letters on the following grounds:

Words spoken to another are subject to further inquiry by the party spoken to as to the meaning of the speaker, and a sort of cross-examination made as to the matter which was communicated to him; and all those things may be brought out in the examination of the witness who comes into court [...]
(*Complete Report* 113)

Unlike memoranda or diaries, posted letters are semi-public documents.⁹¹

Madeleine’s letters were not forgeries. But, in *Madeleine Graham*, Lady Glengariff’s perplexity as to how one of her letters can come to bear writing that looks like hers, and yet which she knows is not (468), implies that letter-based trials could easily lead to injustices. *Madeleine Graham*, read in the light of the Smith trial reports, suggests the remarkable possibility that a less transgressive type of forger than a felonious

forger (from a legal point of view), could, in mid-Victorian England, bring about someone's conviction and execution.⁹²

Ostensibly, the origins of Madeleine Graham's forgery lie in the letters that were the legal and public focus of the Smith trial. There were hundreds of letters (many in envelopes) from Madeleine to Émile. Copies were made, and from these, excerpts were read out in court as evidence (*Complete Report* 69-70). Handwriting, envelopes, and postmarks, featured strongly in the case. To avoid Mr. Smith's recognising his handwriting, L'Angelier had asked a workmate to address his letters to Madeleine (*Complete Report* 72).⁹³ Likewise, Madeleine disguised her own handwriting on her envelopes.⁹⁴ The whole trial was predicated on the invasion of private correspondence. Whether in the expertise with which Vivian Fauntleroy "scanned the caligraphy [*sic*]" (46) of a letter, or in the letter forgeries of Mlle. Loriôt and Madeleine Graham, *Madeleine Graham* is a novel whose depiction of forgery apparently stems from the calligraphic and epistolary preoccupations of the Smith trial.⁹⁵

But the same concerns are to be found in *Lady Audley's Secret*. From Lady Audley's handwriting, Robert Audley can visualise her appearance (64). "Helen Talboys" writes in "a hand that Robert Audley knew only too well [i.e. Lady Audley's]" (250). This letter offers, the amateur detective proclaims, "[t]he evidence of handwriting" (270), which may be used against Lady Audley. But later he mistakes George Talboys' handwriting. After reading a letter said to be written by his friend, Robert Audley wrongly asserts, "This was not written by George Talboys" (421). George's writing hand (his right) had been broken when Lady Audley pushed him down the well. He composed the letter soon after the incident with his left hand. As many have noted, the references to poison in *Lady Audley's Secret*, and its plot of

a bigamous woman who tries to kill her first husband, allude to the Madeleine Smith trial.⁹⁶ Within the context of these allusions to the Smith trial, *Lady Audley's Secret* had raised the question of the reliability of handwriting in letters. Although Robinson's response to the Smith trial is in many respects independent, she also appears to have developed her friend's question into one of forgery.

Indeed, forgery established itself in *Madeleine Graham* to a large extent via contemporary fiction. Prior to the novel's publication, forgery had become associated with the Madeleine Smith trial in a number of best-selling novels by several major authors. Robinson, a novelist still living with her bookseller-father in sixties London, is extremely likely to have kept herself abreast of the latest literary fashion and followed its lead. In Collins's *No Name* (1862-63), Magdalen Vanstone buys poison from a chemist, who warns her of its potential lethality, and asks her to give her name and address – Madeleine Smith's experience in Glasgow precisely.⁹⁷ Captain Wragge, Magdalen's accomplice in her schemes, forges a personal letter. Madeleine's forged postscript also recalls Lady Mason's forged codicil; both these forged appendages reverse the main text. In her sexy amorality and in the sensational nature of her trial, Lady Mason might well have struck contemporary readers as a muted and middle-aged version of Madeleine Smith. Though one could possibly link real-life forgers to Madeleine Graham,⁹⁸ her forgery is fundamentally the product of a forgery-rich *literary* environment.

Trial reports and newspaper novels

Whereas Collins and Trollope subtly, and perhaps even unconsciously, worked elements of the Smith trial into their narratives, Robinson's novel almost functioned

as an alternative trial report. The *Saturday Review* derided *Madeleine Graham* as “a commentary [...] on a chapter in the Newgate Calendar” (331). The *Athenaeum* identified this quality as the reason for the novel’s artistic failure. The official “report of the trial [...] [had taken] hold on the sympathy and imagination” of all who read it, the journal explained, because it was “a real story, concerning real persons.” Although similar to the trial report, *Madeleine Graham* lacked the “*reality*” of it. In other words, Robinson’s novel offered the public only an inconsequential imitation of that which they had already read. Unlike the trial report, there were no “terrible human interests at stake.” Furthermore, the Smith trial was too recent in the collective memory for it to be a suitable subject for literature: “there has been no time for any halo of romance or picturesque interest to gather over the accessories of the story; the very ‘brown silk dress, elegantly made,’ which the prisoner wore at her trial, has scarcely gone out of date.” *Madeleine Graham*, it seemed to middle-class contemporaries, was inappropriately competing with the Smith case as a kind of heavily embroidered newspaper narrative.

If *Madeleine Graham* was indeed in competition with the trial reports of the case, this was largely possible because they themselves were, in important respects, stylistically indistinguishable from much contemporary popular fiction. Sheila Sullivan compares the style of *The Times* report of the Smith trial to that of “the Victorian novel” (22). Her conclusion may be confirmed by reading *The Glasgow Poisoning Case* (1857). The report was published in London and, with its explanations of the customs of a Scots law court (76), was clearly intended for an English readership. Madeleine Smith, we are told, spoke in a “clear sweet treble” (8), and had a “restless and sparkling eye” (6); she had “perfect self-possession” (7); she stepped into the dock “with all the buoyancy with which she might have entered the

box of a theatre” (6). In focusing on the senses, typically deploying two adjectives per noun, suggesting comparisons that a reader can visualise, attempting to evoke movement in sentence rhythms, and surmising states of mind from externals, these descriptions of Madeleine Smith are fundamentally novelistic. Reporters of the Smith trial often wrote in the guise of a common type of fictional narrator, the observer who describes and comments upon a given plot and who knows characters only from the outside.

The *Saturday* and *Athenaeum* reviewers conceptualised *Madeleine Graham* as a kind of *Glasgow Poisoning Case* at one step removed, rather than as a truly artistic transformation of a real-life trial,⁹⁹ and they carefully distinguished the two stories of the two Madeleines. In so doing, the reviewers alluded to the basis of their objection to the novel. Would the two stories, in years to come, become blurred in the public memory? Undoubtedly, *Madeleine Graham* actively encouraged a confusion of the factual Madeleine with the fictional one. Altick tells us that, “Readers [...] would superimpose on the fictional character of Merdle the image of Sadleir they received from the daily press” (*Presence* 610). There is no good reason why this process should not have operated in reverse. From the *Athenaeum*’s perspective, the fictional Madeleine might, over time, displace the factual one in many readers’ memories. *Madeleine Graham* threatened, at least, to rewrite, in the popular imagination, the story of Madeleine Smith as a poisoner *and* a forger – a female version of Wainwright, no less.

Forgery as a transcendental metaphor

Although Madeleine Smith was not a literal forger, the forgery attributed to her in *Madeleine Graham* symbolised perfectly her shocking falseness. Madeleine Smith was like a depraved character from a French novel, but one disguised as a genteel Scottish maiden. At the very least, she was a cruel deceiver who confirmed Victorian society's worst fears about what passions lay within apparently well-brought up young women. Or so Robinson, in common with many of her contemporaries, officially suggested.¹⁰⁰ To make these points, however, Robinson had, it appeared, compromised her fidelity to the Madeleine Smith trial reports. But *Madeleine Graham* is perhaps more properly analogous to a legal fiction: misleading on the surface, but underneath conveying a wider and fundamental truth about Madeleine Smith. Robinson's *Madeleine Graham* proposed that the sensation novel, through its *art*, could, paradoxically, offer a higher truth about real-life criminals than trial reports. For Robinson, forgery is less a realistic detail than a device for transcending the realism of newspapers.

Bulwer-Lytton might well have had more time for *Madeleine Graham* than Mary Elizabeth Braddon appeared to think. Although I have defined Bulwer-Lytton's "Ideal" in a more technical sense in the previous chapter, Bulwer-Lytton would also have been familiar with the more general meaning in which Emma Robinson would have used the word, especially in 1866. David Skilton reminds us that by "the ideal" the mid-Victorians commonly meant, "high art" (Introduction, *Lady Audley's Secret* xi). Bulwer-Lytton's *Lucretia* and Robinson's *Madeleine Graham* both aspired to notions of "the ideal" in their representations of forgery. In *Lucretia*, forgery allegorically expressed the fraudulence of mimesis in art. In *Madeleine Graham*,

forgery was a generically apposite metonym of considerable potency. While expressing mid-Victorian concerns about young women's morality, and simultaneously querying the law's reliance on letters as evidence on which a conviction could be secured, *Madeleine Graham*'s representation of forgery also championed how the novel, in an era of sensational news reporting, could both copy and elevate the truths of newspapers. Although both authors publicly defended their respective novels,¹⁰¹ Robinson's novel alone resounds with confidence in its own ethical and aesthetic value.

3.5 Conclusion

This chapter has shown the different ways in which real-life forgers enabled several Victorian novels to negotiate and develop various notions of sensationalism. For *Great Expectations*, *Orley Farm*, *Wylder's Hand* and, less directly, *Madeleine Graham*, real-life forgery was a creative force, empowering each to explore exciting artistic directions. Provis helped Dickens dispute *The Woman in White*'s reorientation of the Gothic, and argue for his own. Lady Ricketts inspired Trollope's sophisticated equivocation over sensationalism's erotic relations with the male reader. From fragments of the tales of real-life forgers, Le Fanu made a perfect crucible in which he could fire up sensationalism with supernaturalism, and display his own technical skill at subsuming the former in the latter. Real-life forgers influenced Emma Robinson from a distance, mainly through the literary atmosphere created by real-life forgery. For her, forgery was an idealist representation, one that challenged the realism of

newspapers while appearing to emulate it. In all these novels, real-life forgery engendered a tremendous resourcefulness of form.

Notes

¹ Collins did not invent the genre with *The Woman in White*. As *The Columbia History of the British Novel* (1994) records, *Basil* (1852) was “the first novel [that] Collins wrote in the sensation mode” (497). In “Sensation Novels” (1862), Margaret Oliphant linked the genre to French novels, Hawthorne, Bulwer-Lytton and Dickens. Winifred Hughes gives a lucid exposition of the sensation novel’s place in literary history, particularly its relation to the Newgate novel, in *The Maniac in the Cellar* (1980). See also her authoritative essay, “The Sensation Novel” (2002).

² In accounting for the sensation novel’s demise, the *Athenaeum* explained its plotting thus:

[F]or the purpose of the ‘sensation’ novel it was necessary to keep the secret at any price, even that of spoiling the *vraisemblance*. This, in fact, must be the Nemesis of the ‘sensational’ school. As soon as novels begin to depend for their interest not on depth of thought, beauty of language, accuracy of description, or development of character and incident, but simply on the excitement caused by a story of crime and its detection, or concealment, and endeavour to fix the reader’s attention merely by arousing his curiosity, every succeeding plot must be constructed so as to defeat his increasing ingenuity in guessing riddles which, after all, cannot be much varied, and so the one merit which the earlier novels of the school possessed, a certain dexterity of construction, disappears, and we get merely an arbitrary juxtaposition of incidents, none of which has necessarily any bearing upon another.

(Rev. of *A Strange World*, by Mary Elizabeth Braddon)

³ The sensation novel’s obsession with what lay beneath ordinary middle-class life prompted much contemporary discussion. The anonymity fostered by the growth of suburbia made the possibility of such secrets seem more likely. On family secrets, see McCormack, *Le Fanu* (60). According to Boyle (“‘Fishy Extremities’”), moreover, critics’ attacks on the sensation novel were part of a strategy for upholding an ideology of respectability.

⁴ On the surveillance culture proposed and explored by the sensation novel, see Trodd, “The Policeman and the Lady,” and Showalter, “Family Secrets and Domestic Subversion.”

⁵ In *The Gay Science* (1866), E. S. Dallas wrote that sensation heroines commit “masculine deeds” (137). Also see Oliphant, “Sensation Novels,” and Kate Flint, *The Woman Reader* 274-93. An interesting counterpoint to Oliphant’s views may be found in Ann Cvetkovich’s *Mixed Feelings* (1992), which offers a feminist and theory-based account of gender issues in sensation fiction. Like Oliphant, Cvetkovich is primarily concerned with the sensation novel’s effects on the reader.

⁶ Although the sensation novel had a set of distinguishing features, it was also, as Lyn Pykett explains, “a process, a socio-symbolic message” (*The Sensation Novel* 8). For middle-class readers, the sensation novel expressed and refracted their varieties of unease at the rapid modernization of society. In sensation fiction, the lower classes mixed with the middle classes within a context of contagious

criminality; women committed manly acts and challenged patriarchal authority; the stuff of the penny dreadful found its way into the respectable triple-decker (ibid. 9).

⁷ Pamela K. Gilbert suggests that sensation novels were so popular because they reassuringly ordered the chaos in society implied by the haphazard and relentless nature of newspaper crime reporting. In Gilbert's view, sensation fiction offered a safe distance between the reader and real life (69). Moreover, she argues convincingly that the positioning of a novel specifically as a sensation novel in the literary marketplace – and therefore as an inferior literary product – to a large extent diffused the subversive potential of a number of novels, particularly those written by women (78).

⁸ On the successful handling of sensational incidents or moments, see Cvetkovich, "Ghostlier Determinations."

⁹ By elaborating on the novel's classical allusions, Gilbert highlights Robert Audley's epic journey into accepting his duties to his society.

¹⁰ On sensationalism's relation to realism, see Kendrick. Christopher Kent gives a particularly stimulating account of sensationalism's relation to reality. He argues that, "[n]umerous examples can be cited of Collins showing his readers how the consensual version of probability can be contrary to reality and lead to miscarriages of justice" (276). Sensation fiction, he suggests, could be more real than the kind of reality upheld by society, and upon which classic realism ostensibly modelled itself.

¹¹ See Pykett, *Dickens* 168. In his anonymous review of *Great Expectations* in *The Times* (17 Oct. 1861), E. S. Dallas deemed that, "It is quite equal to *The Woman in White* in the management of the plot, but, perhaps, this is not saying much when we have to add that the story, though not impossible like Mr. Wilkie Collins's, is very improbable. If Mr. Dickens, however, chose to keep the common horde of readers together by marvels of an improbable story, he attracted the better class of readers by his fancy, his fun, and his sentiment." Furthermore, Oliphant reviewed *Great Expectations* under the title, "Sensation Novels" (575-80).

¹² See, for example, Bernstein, Brantlinger, "What is so 'Sensational' about the 'Sensation Novel'?" (9), Rance 51-63.

¹³ Dickens was a connoisseur of forgers. Even Dickens's father might ~~even~~ have been a forger – of Charles Dickens's name (Ackroyd 324).

¹⁴ See Weiss, "Secret Pockets."

¹⁵ See Swann, and J. C. Hotten.

¹⁶ The details in this paragraph have been summarised from this source and those that follow: Burke (2: 301-10); Provis, *The Victim of Fatality*; Thesiger, *Smyth versus Smyth*; “A Trial of An Extraordinary Character” (*Household Narrative*); “The Trial of Richard Hugh Smyth” (*Household Narrative*); “Smyth v. Smyth” (*The Times* 9, 11, 13, 17 Aug. 1853); “The Smyth Forgery Case” (*The Times* 17, 27 and 29 Aug. 1853, 15 Sept. 1853); and “Death of Sir Richard Hugh Smyth” (*The Times* 29 May 1855). My outline of the case generally follows common details, though most are mentioned in *The Times* and *Household Narrative* reports.

¹⁷ The irony of Provis’s failure to heed the Smyth motto - qui capit capitur (he who takes is taken) - is excruciating.

¹⁸ See Bentley 105-07, Cairns 67-97.

¹⁹ See also *The Heath House and Ashton Cause* 7.

²⁰ There might have been correspondences between Provis’s defence speech at his criminal trial and *The Victim of Fatality*. I can find no transcript of the speech, but, for example, bizarre references to Napoleon occur in both *The Victim of Fatality* and the *Household Narrative*’s brief account of the speech.

²¹ Provis is not the only source for Magwitch, of course. See Friedman, “The Complex Origins of Pip and Magwitch.”

²² With regard to *Great Expectations* specifically, Ackroyd argues that some of Dickens’s material for Miss Havisham, and some of his knowledge of Australian convicts, comes from the January 1850 issue (886).

²³ On the collaborative composition of “A Message From the Sea,” see Nayder 132-34.

²⁴ The Provis details are in the *Household Narrative* reports and *The Times* 29 May 1855.

²⁵ Provis’s spelling was ridiculed in court for its inaccuracy (see “Smyth v. Smyth,” *The Times* 17 Aug. 1853), and verse quotations appear throughout *The Victim of Fatality*, arguably an extended version of Provis’s defence speech.

²⁶ See “A Trial of an Extraordinary Character” 183.

²⁷ Dickens would probably have been familiar with this aspect of the case. Even if he had not read *The Victim of Fatality*, he could easily have known, via the *Household Narrative* (Aug. 1853: 184), about Provis’s claim that he bore the Gothic stigmata of the Smyths.

²⁸ Duncan 177-253; John, *Dickens’s Villains* 95-121.

²⁹ See Filmer.

³⁰ Kilgour regards Frankenstein's monster - which Magwitch here obviously resembles - as the personification of the Gothic genre itself (4). The following, however, all see Magwitch as Pip's author, rather than a text: Brooks, "Repetition, Repression and Return" 104; Tracy 55; Baumgarten, "Calligraphy and Code" 66; Hara 593.

³¹ Michel Peled Ginsburg also views chapter one as a "primal event" (117).

³² By "inauthentic," I mean both "untrustworthy" and "invalid."

³³ Dickens must have known not only of *The Woman in White*'s forged tombstone, but also of the one in Warren's *Ten Thousand A-Year*. It is likely that the idea of claimants, tombstones and forgery were embedded in Dickens's mind.

³⁴ Regular readers of *Household Words* – *All The Year Round*'s predecessor – would have been familiar with the workings of criminal trials from an unsigned article on the topic by Henry Morley.

³⁵ Defence counsels did exist before 1836. They could point out matters of law and cross-examine witnesses, but they could not address the jury (Cairns 3). In pointing out that Compeyson's defence counsel does address the jury (351), Dickens unequivocally stylises him as a post-1836 defence counsel.

³⁶ See Botting 102-05.

³⁷ Harvey, for example, views Lady Mason's criminality as a way of challenging Victorian "myths" about women as homely moral guardians and the law's infallibility (93-107). Trodd implies that Lady Mason's forgery symbolises the way in which femininity is itself a fraud in Victorian society (*Domestic Crime* 111-14, 144-49).

³⁸ Trollope's disapproval of the author's keeping the reader in the dark – a typical narrative strategy for the sensation novel - is well documented. See chapter fifteen of *Barchester Towers* and chapter thirteen of *The Bertrams*; and Kucich, "Transgression in Trollope."

³⁹ See Nancy Beth Deal 17-43.

⁴⁰ I know of no other piece that makes this claim. Even T. H. S. Escott, who set out to show Trollope's "originals," makes no mention of Lady Ricketts.

⁴¹ See *Re Straford 16 Beavan 27, 51 ER 686 [1852]*.

⁴² Trollope's repeated identification of Lady Mason with the biblical Rebekah even appears to allude to Lady Ricketts' first name, Rebecca. (On the significance of the Rebekah theme in *Orley Farm*, see Gilead, and Lansbury 157-71.)

⁴³ For a lucid account of the matter of the forged signature and the role of the attesting witnesses, see *Newton v Ricketts* [1861].

⁴⁴ I am very grateful to Dr. Charlotte Mitchell for these details of Lady Ricketts' family background.

⁴⁵ It is unlikely, however, that Lady Ricketts is the sole influence behind Lady Mason. In the February before Trollope began to write *Orley Farm* (in July 1860), for example, *Affair of the Neckless: Unpublished Memoirs of the Comte de Lamotte-Valois* appeared. Penned by the husband of a convicted aristocratic female forger who had been a favourite of Louis XVI's court, the count's racy memoir also declares itself as a possible – but unlikely – stimulus for Lady Mason.

⁴⁶ A libel action was brought by Newton against the proprietors of the *Cheltenham Examiner* for publishing an article accusing him of “falsely and maliciously accus[ing] his mother-in-law, Lady Ricketts, and four other persons, of forging, or conspiring to forge the will of the late Sir T. R. Ricketts” (*Newton v Rowe and Another*). Various cases relating to Sir Robert's trusts were heard in 1848 (*Newton v Askew*), 1852 (*Re Straford 16 Beavan* 27), 1860 (*Re Ricketts' Trusts*), and 1861 (*Newton v Ricketts*).

⁴⁷ See R. C. Burke.

⁴⁸ *DNB*. Sir Peter Laurie was a London magistrate at this time, and therefore is almost certainly “Sir P. Laurie.” There is, however, no mention of Lady Ricketts in Sir Peter George Laurie's *Sir Peter Laurie: A Family Memoir* (1901). Either Sir Peter G. Laurie did not know of the hearing, or he considered the Lady Ricketts case relatively unimportant, or wholly inappropriate, for the purposes of this privately printed memoir.

⁴⁹ See Laurie 207-08 and 217-22. Sir Peter, for example, was featured in an article in the *Illustrated London News* in 1843.

⁵⁰ See also Laurie 7.

⁵¹ On Sir Peregrine's gullibility, see Herbert 232-34.

⁵² Donald Smalley introduces the *Cornhill* review as follows: “[t]he great success of *Framley Parsonage* had associated Trollope's name with the magazine, and *The Small House at Allington* had been appearing in monthly instalments in the *Cornhill* since September [1862]” (157).

⁵³ On the commercial aspects of Trollope's engagement with sensationalism, see Sears.

⁵⁴ Trollope might well have drawn the same conclusion himself. According to Glendinning, Trollope wrote fiction on the train (218) and, "[l]ike most men of his period, [he] found railway compartments sexually exciting" (452).

⁵⁵ For a pioneering account of Trollope's coded erotica, see Cohen 159-190.

⁵⁶ See McCormack.

⁵⁷ For a general account of Le Fanu's peculiarly Anglo-Irish, Gothic and ambivalent relation to the sensational novel, see Sage ix-xv, Brantlinger, "What is 'Sensational' about the 'Sensation Novel'?" 1-28. *Le Fanu's Gothic: The Rhetoric of Darkness*, by Victor Sage, promises to be a major contribution to Le Fanu studies. At the time of writing, it has not yet been published, and my attempt to contact Prof. Sage was unsuccessful.

⁵⁸ In *Wilkie Collins*, S. M. Ellis claims that Gylingen is Buxton (161).

⁵⁹ I examine the Roupell case in depth in chapter four.

⁶⁰ De Cresseron comments: "Had he knowledge, public talents, training? Nothing of the sort" (3: 188). Roupell was similarly criticised in *The Times* for his political inexperience. See "Mr. Roupell and His Constituents" (*The Times* 30 Jan. 1861), for example.

⁶¹ See "Mr. Justice Harbottle." In the *Belgravia*, then edited by M. E. Braddon, the story was entitled "The Haunted House in Westminster," but it originated in "An Account of Some Strange Disturbances in Aungier Streer" (1853) (Tracy, ed., *In A Glass Darkly* 326). The origins of Le Fanu's stories can stretch back years.

⁶² Elizabeth Bowen is the first to record Le Fanu's narrative returns to Ireland within an ostensibly English subject matter (8).

⁶³ In *Dissolute Characters*, McCormack implies that the ring episodes originate in a Persian ring that was given to Le Fanu's brother, William, by their father (61-62). And yet there still remains the very faint possibility that the Provis forgery case's details, intermingled with particulars of Le Fanu's personal life, could have found their way into Le Fanu's forgery novel.

⁶⁴ McCormack implies that Le Fanu kept himself informed of Collins's work (*Le Fanu* 161, *Dissolute Characters* 164).

⁶⁵ See Sweeney, for example.

⁶⁶ As a scholarly man fascinated by visions, Le Fanu would have known that Dante had placed both magicians and forgers in the same circle of hell (the eighth). This fact might explain, in part, the reasoning behind Le Fanu's connection of the two.

⁶⁷ McCormack also sees hands as signifying textual preoccupations. He relates the ghostly hand in this tale to questions of "compositional unity" in *The House By the Churchyard* (*Dissolute Characters* 38-39); also see *Le Fanu* 142-43.

⁶⁸ Sage also remarks how Le Fanu often "recycled from short stories" ("Introduction" x).

⁶⁹ See Peterson on Le Fanu's delicate incorporation of supernaturalism into realism in his novels (125-26). As Melada observes, most of Le Fanu's "material" from 1843 to his death "consists of supernatural fiction" (107). The novels are exceptional in this respect.

⁷⁰ Le Fanu's supernaturalism, it should be stressed, was always negotiated in one way or another. See, for example, Sage, "Resurrecting the Regency: Horror and Eighteenth-Century Comedy in Le Fanu's Fiction."

⁷¹ George Talboys orders the tombstone, believing her to be dead, but he acts upon a false notice in *The Times*, informing of Helen Talboys' death. The tombstone is a creative forgery, unwitting executed by George Talboys, but conceived and prompted by Lady Audley.

⁷² See Blain et al., *Feminist Companion* 914-15.

⁷³ In his introduction to the 1904 edition of *Whitefriars*, Ernest A. Barker regards her as a popular Victorian historical romance writer, comparing her to Walter Scott, G. P. R. James, Bulwer-Lytton and Alexandre Dumas. She has not been without critical attention. In 1944, Montague Summers opined that not only were her historical novels "excellent reading," but that "[h]er novels of contemporary life move swiftly, full of vigour, with some pretty mordant sketches of morals and manners" (48). And, in 1959, Myron F. Brightfield briefly noted her portrayals of America.

⁷⁴ It was rumoured that her father, Joseph Robinson, was the author of *Whitefriars* (Summers 48).

⁷⁵ The criteria for this award, however, did not necessarily include literary merit. See "Civil List Pensions."

⁷⁶ Summers explains the reason for this confinement as follows: "she used to roam about the grounds [of her house] grasping an old horse pistol, primed and ready to be presented at the head of the first intruder [...] A lady who knew her well always spoke of her as 'Amazonian Emma,' and once

described her to me as having the air of a tragic actress about to step upon the stage. Eventually her eccentricities developed so strongly that she was removed under supervision to a home [...]” (48).

⁷⁷ I refer not only to Lady Audley, but also to Mrs. Maxwell, confined to an asylum, while M. E.

Braddon bore Mr. Maxwell’s children.

⁷⁸ Braddon dedicated *Sir Jasper’s Tenant*, “To my Dear Friend the Author of “Whitefriars” (Summers 48).

⁷⁹ See Sadleir, *Collecting Yellowbacks* 154. Sadleir does not mention *Madeleine Graham*, but the British Library copy has yellow-green boards and was published in *Routledge’s Railway Library*.

⁸⁰ Bulwer-Lytton – along with Dickens, Thackeray and others – supported Robinson’s application for assistance from the Royal Literary Fund in 1867 (Robinson, Letter to the General Committee of the Royal Literary Fund, n. d. [1869?]). But his letter to her on 4 January 1867 was hardly encouraging:

I have very little interest with the Literary Fund & unluckily such as I have is already bespoke. I believe the Guild is going to sell its houses & invest the money into small pensions, but the arrangement is not complete. All applications should be made to W. H. Wills Esq. office of *All The Year Round*.

⁸¹ To secure her position as Lady Audley, Mrs. Helen Talboys/Lucy Graham knocks George Talboys down a well. In *Madeleine Graham*, Madeleine is Camille’s “wife in the sight of God” (347). She tries to poison him. Lillian Nayder argues that, in *Lady Audley’s Secret*, “Braddon suggests that the real threat posed to the British empire in the 1860s [...] [comes] from Englishwomen agitating for their rights, and empowered to divorce their husbands and reclaim their property rights” (39). But surely the point is that the men in these novels do not need to resort to criminality to get rid of their spouses. Sir Robert Audley has his wife packed off to a Belgian asylum until she dies; Behringbright simply divorces his. Both these novels show an awareness of how difficult and humiliating it was for women to instigate divorce proceedings. Nayder herself points out that, “the [1857] Act allowed husbands to divorce their wives on the grounds of adultery, and granted wives the right to divorce adulterous husbands if their adultery was compounded by cruelty, bigamy, incest, or bestiality” (33). Adding arsenic – readily available from Victorian chemists - to a cup of tea, or arranging an “accident,” might well have seemed a preferable alternative to some mid-Victorian women.

⁸² In his introduction to his edition of *Lady Audley’s Secret*, David Skilton similarly hones in on Braddon’s word “Babyfied” (xix). See also Langland 11-12.

⁸³ On French novels in *Lady Audley's Secret*, see Skilton xiii-xv. In *Madeleine Graham*, after a discussion of French novels, we are informed that France is the home of “diseased imagination” (17). The main offenders appear to have been Paul de Kock and Dumas *fils*.

⁸⁴ See Ellen Miller Casey. Like Tromp *et al.* (“Introduction” xvii), however, I find Braddon’s conservatism – and Robinson’s – a convention rather than a narrative commitment.

⁸⁵ See also Mary S. Hartman, who regards the letters as an act of defiance to the codes of Victorian society (65).

⁸⁶ Though Robinson’s treatment of French novels is ambiguous, a Victorian reader of *Madeleine Graham* could hardly fail to see their immorality. Madeleine remarks that in French novels, the wife prefers her lover to her husband and, moreover, the “sympathies of the reader are expected to go with her and with the lover” (209). Given the conventional Victorian views of marriage generally espoused in the novel, the reader – perhaps after momentary titillation – is clearly meant to disapprove.

⁸⁷ Braddon’s decision to present Robinson to Bulwer-Lytton as “the Author of Whitefriars,” is, within this context, shrewd on her part and deeply ironic in terms of literary history.

⁸⁸ The reviews did Robinson’s reputation no long-term harm, however. Robinson on no occasion omitted *Madeleine Graham* from the “list of publications” section of the Royal Literary Fund’s application form. And those who supported her applications to the RLF remarked upon her respectability. On 3 January 1870, the publishers George Routledge and Sons, for example, wrote of her “devotion to duty, and respectability as a lady [...]” Although it is possible that the firm might have been trying to erase a question mark over Robinson’s respectability, such comments were a Victorian convention in a formal recommendation for charity and, in Robinson’s case, there is little evidence to suppose that they were untrue.

⁸⁹ For example: Camille resembles Émile, and Minnoch, Behringbright; both Madeleines went to school in London, where they hear the story of how Styrian peasants used arsenic to give them breath to climb steep hills; both know that arsenic (in small doses) can affect the complexion; both immerse themselves in French novels.

⁹⁰ Madeleine conducts a series of intrigues against Emily Maughan, her old schoolfellow. Emily suspects that Madeleine is trying to trap Behringbright into marriage. Madeleine first implies to Behringbright that Emily is in love with Camille. Meanwhile, Behringbright’s friend, Lady Glengariff, is anxious about her son and heir. He has fallen in love with Emily, who is now a governess at Lady

Glengariff's castle in Ireland, but the feeling is not reciprocal. Lady Glengariff, who does not know of Emily's true feelings, is resigned to her son's marriage, and says so to him in a letter. For reasons too complicated to go into here, Madeleine intercepts this letter. In forging a postscript, she turns Lady Glengariff's acceptance of her son's proposed marriage to Emily into a refusal.

⁹¹ Émile's diary, if it had been admitted as evidence, would have shown that he had met Madeleine just before he became ill and just after she had bought arsenic. See MacGowan 107.

⁹² The Scots verdict of "Not Proven" was not, of course, available to English juries.

⁹³ See also *Report* 41, 98.

⁹⁴ See Morland 112, plate opposite.

⁹⁵ A further example is that immediately after her forgery, Madeleine "blot[ted] out the original postmark" (*Madeleine Graham* 263) to avoid any suspicion about the delay in the letter's arrival. Smudged postmarks blighted some of the evidence at the trial. The court ordered the Glasgow Post Office to remedy the problem for the future (*Complete Report* 82, 179).

⁹⁶ See Helfield 180-82.

⁹⁷ Within the context of arsenic and cosmetics, Wynne also connects the Smith trial to *No Name* (110).

⁹⁸ Considered within the context of Lady Mason and a mid-Victorian readership, Madeleine Graham is distantly related to a real-life forger, Lady Ricketts. A real-life forger could also have exerted a shaping influence on Madeleine Graham far more directly, however. William Palmer, the Rugeley Poisoner, was convicted in 1856. Like his predecessor Wainewright, Palmer had also committed a number of forgeries. The trial lingered in the public imagination well into the 1860s. Mindful of her readers' expectations, Emma Robinson would surely have been attuned to this more recent example of a poisoner who was also a forger. (On Palmer's literary influence, see Sutherland, "Wilkie Collins and the Origin of the Sensation Novel," "Introduction," *The Woman in White* xvi-xvii.)

⁹⁹ It is worth briefly comparing *Madeleine Graham* with *Such Things Are* (1863), a romance by Matilda Charlotte Houstoun that also draws on the Smith trial. In her preface, Houstoun claims to critique "a terrible moral malady" in modern young ladies. *Such Things Are* uses poison as a metaphor for French novels, has a wicked young lady (Florence Harley), a poisoned Frenchified lover (Adolphus Raynham Fletcher, who is given strychnine rather than arsenic), and a quasi-bigamous relationship. Florence, probably like Madeleine Smith, gets away with the crime. No one suspects her, careless chemists are blamed, and she marries respectably. In 1861, Madeleine Smith married George Wardle,

William Morris's business manager (MacGowan 153). Florence marries "an earnest and high-principled clergyman" (3: 333). While *Such Things Are* takes a few major details from the Smith trial, these do not form the main texture of the novel, which is more generally concerned with the manners and intrigues of the young ladies of the day. Robinson, in contrast, chose to tackle the trial reports head-on, and, in my opinion, wrote a far more interesting novel as a result.

¹⁰⁰ In the light of her soubriquet, "Amazonian Emma" (Summers 48), it is likely that Robinson had some sympathy with Madeleine's plight.

¹⁰¹ Both authors were unafraid of controversy. The Lord Chamberlain's Office banned Emma Robinson's historical comedy, *Richelieu in Love* (1844) for "'bringing church and state into contempt'" (*Feminist Companion* 914). The editor of the 1909 Cassell edition of *Whitefriars*, moreover, drew attention to "the note of defiance which appears on the title-page of *Whitehall*, her second historical romance." Robinson wrote, "I owe thee nothing, reader [...] I look for no favour at thy hands. I am independent; I fear nothing." Bulwer-Lytton and Robinson had more in common than an interest in historical romance.

4. Forgers, Novels, and Discourses

So far, this account of how real-life forgery developed Victorian fiction has been roughly sequential. While real-life forgery cases led novels to worry about matters of realist representation in the 1840s and 1850s, they helped take fiction on sensational adventures in form during the early 1860s. This forgery-inspired chronological growth in Victorian fiction's self-confidence is partly explained by the difference in the nature and scale of the literary issues involved. Novels simply have greater anxieties about representation (the awesome project of depicting an entire fictional world) than they do about genre (essentially the more pragmatic business of literary style and audience expectation). But, as many Victorian novelists, critics and readers knew well, novels try to do more than depict a reality or embrace an entertaining aesthetic. Victorian fiction's use of real-life forgery was also governed, in a variety of novels, by the question of Victorian fiction's discursive agency. Though very closely connected to matters of representation and style, this was, nevertheless, a distinct epistemological issue. Did Victorian fiction actually *engage* with the discourses of Victorian society - politics and law, in particular – and, if so, what did this engagement entail? In this chapter, I investigate how and why a significant body of Victorian fiction dispelled, through its treatment of real-life forgery cases, its initial suspicions that perhaps no such meeting was possible.

The question of Victorian fiction's discursive agency

The Victorian critical consensus at mid-century was that fiction could, in certain circumstances, influence politics and law as though it were part of these discourses.¹

When the *Economist* reviewed Dickens's Christmas Book, "The Chimes" (1845), it declared: "[t]he author has been heretofore merely a novelist – in the Chimes he is a political philosopher and social reformer. His book is a political and social essay of intense interest" (43).² *Blackwood's* averred in 1855 that Disraeli was "no less a political writer [in his novels] for the scanty love-story which winds its silken thread through his pages" (Oliphant, "Bulwer" 223).³ Victorian fiction's apparent discursive agency was not limited to politics. In "Sensation Novels" (1863), H. L. Mansel saw Collins's *No Name* (1862) as "principally a protest against the law which determines the social position of illegitimate children" (138). Bulwer-Lytton believed that the novel could actually achieve legal change. *Paul Clifford*, he reflected in his preface to the 1845 edition of *Night and Morning*, "had its share in the wise and great relaxation of our Criminal Code" (47). Victorian fiction could possess, he continued, a "material moral" that could "work its effect [...] on Legislation" (48).⁴ For many Victorians, the novel could affect the workings of law and politics with remarkable directness.

Of all the major periodicals, *Fraser's Magazine* perhaps writes most tellingly on the matter. In "Charles Dickens and *David Copperfield*" (Dec. 1850), the anonymous reviewer quotes an extract from the section describing Heep's imprisonment. This is then juxtaposed with an extract from Thomas Carlyle's *Latter-Day Pamphlets*, No. II (707-10). Both Dickens and Carlyle are addressing essentially the same topic of the modern penitentiary. *Fraser's* concludes, "[t]he inference at which Dickens hints is identical with that which Carlyle draws; that is to say, an entire condemnation of the whole system" (709). Fiction, *Fraser's* implies in the word "identical," is a subtler version of political discourse. The writer adds, "Fortunately both these gentleman have front seats on the platform, and are sure of a hearing [...] we [i.e. the readers] are in the body of the room" (710). In this metaphor of the

political meeting, both fiction and the political pamphlet are credited with the same epistemological capital and discursive agency.

In an earlier article, “A Triad of Novels” (Nov. 1850), *Fraser’s* had declared, “Fiction, no longer limiting her range to the domesticities, boldly invades those realms of politics and economy” (574). Although by “boldly invades those realms” the reviewer might have meant no more than “writes about,” the trope is suggestive, particularly when coupled with a phrase used later in the piece, “the realms of literature” (588). “Realms” carries quasi-medieval connotations of control and combat: systems of government (to be maintained, developed, or extended) and spaces of power (to be defended, cultivated, or expanded). The realm of Victorian fiction is here depicted as sending an army (Charles Kingsley’s *Alton Locke*, in fact) to “usurp the province of blue-books” (576). This province lies, of course, in the realm of politics. The idea of fiction’s taking over the role of the parliamentary report is envisaged in *Fraser’s* as a belligerent seizure of discursive power.

These claims, assumptions, and concerns have shaped modern criticism. The Victorian notion of “realms” of literature and politics has been imperceptibly absorbed into Foucault-inspired theories of discourse.⁵ It is these theories that underpin recent critical discussion of the Victorian novel’s relation to Victorian society. Joseph W. Childers (1995) speaks of a “multilateral discursive negotiation [...] between *Coningsby* and parliamentary politics” (27). He attempts “to place the novel on the same discursive and constitutive footing as other important interpretative enterprises of the era” (40).⁶ Randall Craig (2000) compares, on the basis that they were contiguous, Victorian legal cases with fictional representations of “promissory practices” (x). Lyn Pykett (2001) observes that, “The medical discourse on puerperal insanity intersected with the legal discourse on infanticide [in *Lady*

Audley's Secret]" (82).⁷ (Braddon's novel, she assumes, was integrated into these discourses.) Victorian novelists, critics, and their commentators in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries, are in broad agreement on the theoretical ability of the Victorian novel to engage, whether generally or with regard to a specific social issue, with the society it represented.

In more practical terms, this supposed engagement might have taken the following form: a Victorian novelist sought, in a particular novel, to induce political or legal change; he or she treated the novel genre as though it could, in a places, serve as a kind of political pamphlet, one in which particular fictional techniques could be deployed to advance a specific argument; if convincing, this novel's representations of political or legal issues could powerfully influence its readers' thoughts and feelings; and some of these readers, in turn, would, in so far as they were inclined and able to do so according to their rank or occupation in society, bring political or legal pressure to bear in support of this novel's political or legal argument. In his preface to the fifth edition of *Coningsby*, for example, Disraeli saw fiction as an alternative arena for political debate: "It was not originally the intention of the writer to adopt the form of fiction as the instrument to scatter his suggestions, but, after reflection, he resolved to avail himself of a method which, in the temper of the times, offered the best chance of influencing opinion" (19).⁸ Bulwer-Lytton likewise had great confidence in his readership: "[o]pinion may be more than the servile shadow of Law" (1845 Preface, *Night and Morning* 48). From a different standpoint, Fitzjames Stephen also acknowledged, rather caustically, "the influence exercised by [...] novels over the [...] political opinions of the young, the ignorant, and the inexperienced" ("The License of Modern Novelists" 125). Victorian novelists and critics, as a rule, had considerable belief in the power of authors, novels, and public

opinion to create a mechanism for connecting the novel to political and legal discourse.

A significant portion of Victorian fiction, I propose, was troubled by the theoretical questions raised by this complex cultural process. How, exactly, did Victorian fiction engage with the discourses of law and politics? Where were the formally defined discursive boundaries - which the novel could not cross - between the novel, law, and politics? How confident could Victorian fiction be that law and politics would accept its interventions in their discourses? Although Victorian culture, in general, evidently believed that the novel could indeed become enmeshed with the discourses of law and politics, Victorian fiction frequently investigated this assumed contact in terms of forgery. It is easy to see why. Percival Glyde, for instance, had “usurped” – in the act of forgery – “a whole social existence” (*The Woman in White* 521). Did not Victorian fiction also seek to appropriate a socio-economic reality through texts that were similarly fictitious? Were these texts not also presented as though they could operate, legitimately, within the discourses of law and politics, discourses whose own texts could not be considered fictitious in precisely the same sense as a novel could be? If so, then were novels, especially polemical novels, not rather like the deceitful fabrications of the forger?

Both Victorian novels and Victorian critics posed and pondered such questions. This chapter discusses some of the details of this debate and examines the role played in it by real-life forgers. My sample includes three major Victorian novels (to show that the question of Victorian fiction’s epistemological status was indeed a key concern for canonical fiction), and two minor ones (chiefly for the purpose of clarifying the issues at stake). First, I consider *The Forger’s Wife* (1855), by John Lang, who is best described (for the purposes of this chapter) as an Anglo-Australian

author. Though a minor English novel, *The Forger's Wife* is part of the canon of Australian Victorian fiction (and was republished in Sydney in 1979). Partly based on the life of Henry Savery, a transported forger who then became a novelist, *The Forger's Wife* investigated the discursive fraudulence of the current English romance (and also proposed a more authentic colonial alternative). To illustrate how this anxiety was generically widespread, I then explicate how *The Woman in White* (1859-60) queried, through its Thomas Provis-inspired depiction of Percival Glyde, its own ventures into legal discourse. Throughout, my textual analyses are located within the context of contemporary opinions on the relation between novels, law, and politics.

The chapter then proceeds to demonstrate that, from the mid-1850s, as the novel's position in Victorian culture became more established, Victorian fiction could use forgery to show its diminution of anxiety about the question of its discursive agency. This process principally took the form of a strategy of displacement. *Little Dorrit* (1855-57) and *The Way We Live Now* (1875), together with *The Woman in White*, variously argued that the discourses with which Victorian fiction sought to engage were relatively dubious themselves. These are, of course, key Victorian novels. But it is the very minor *Mayfair to Millbank* (1870), by the barrister Richard Harris, which offers the most suggestive end to the story (hence its inclusion). Harris's novel not only disconnected the question of fiction's discursive agency from real-life forgery, but also questioned the importance of the question itself. That these four representatives of Victorian fiction achieved this general position of self-assurance, I suggest, was partly attributable to the fact that three of them drew on either John Sadleir or William Roupell: two men who had been practising lawyers and MPs, and who were exposed as forgers.

4.1 Henry Savery, *The Forger's Wife*, and the English Romance: Forging Discourse

How, within the context of forgery, might the discursive operations of Victorian fiction be characterised? One way of beginning to answer this question is to examine the work of a novelist who wrote about real-life forgery in his fiction, who practised law, who had been involved in politics, who worked within the milieu of English novel-writing, and yet who was also in a position to comment upon the English novel from the perspective of the outsider. Such a novelist was John Lang (b. 1816).⁹ After education at Sydney College, he left Australia in 1837 for England, where he spent a year at Trinity College, Cambridge. He entered the Middle Temple in 1838 and was called to the bar in 1841, in which year he returned to Australia. In 1842, Lang was called to the Sydney Bar and became affiliated to the Australian Patriotic Association. At a public meeting at Sydney College and in the preface to his collection of tales of Australian life, *Botany Bay* (1859), he discussed the matter of representative government for New South Wales.¹⁰ He left Australia in 1842 for India, however, where he practised at the Calcutta Bar from 1843 to 1845. From 1846, he edited *The Mofussilite*, a major Anglo-Indian newspaper. Between 1853 and 1859 he resided chiefly in England, where he wrote for *Fraser's Magazine* and *Household Words*, became a friend of Douglas Jerrold and Charles Dickens, and published a number of popular railway novels. He returned to India in 1859, and died there in 1864. Though some of Lang's writings are set in England and India, he is chiefly celebrated today for his vivid portraits of Australian life.¹¹ Nevertheless, Lang's novels were all published in London and primarily written for an English audience.

Lang's romances and the discursive status of English fiction in the 1850s

Lang's railway novels justly belonged, in every sense, to the *Athenaeum*'s category of "cheap fictions." They are romances, and clearly sceptical about the discursive potential of English fiction. In satirising their characters' trivial existences,¹² Lang's romances sometimes also satirised – perhaps inadvertently – the ease with which a number of Victorian novelists assumed that they could make an impact on their readership. In *My Friend's Wife* (1859), the hero, a junior officer named York, takes novels by Disraeli and Bulwer-Lytton purely to pass the time on the voyage home from India (10).¹³ For York, these novels clearly serve the purpose that Carlyle had feared that novels might: "that of harmlessly amusing indolent, languid men" (Rev. of Lockhart's *Life of Scott* [1838], qtd. in Eigner and Worth 2).¹⁴ The other main purpose of novels, as depicted in Lang's fiction, is to glamorise the ordinary. In *Too Clever By Half* (1853), George Harroway dines with a Mr. Brade, where he meets "a novel writer of some celebrity, who had made a "heroine" of Mrs. Brade" (114). In his romances, Lang is at pains to position novels squarely as a means for amusement and diversion.

Furthermore, Lang's romances pointedly emphasise how the mouthpieces of legal discourse mock the pretensions of novelists. The narrator of *The Ex-Wife* (1859) is Eva Stoneycombe, an aspiring novelist. She is called as a witness at a criminal court, where an Old Bailey counsel asks her to state her occupation. When she explains that she earns her living by "literature," he replies, "Literature is a vague word. Tell us what description of literature? Writing begging petitions for impostors, or what?" (Immense laughter, in which the bench joined)" (209). While our sympathies might be with Eva in this courtroom exchange, we are nevertheless given

a powerful image of the law's fractious and condescending view of writers. Bulwer-Lytton might claim that novelists could affect the law, but the lawyers in *The Ex-Wife* primarily regard authors as agents for impostors. As presented in Lang's romances, neither authors, nor their novels, nor their readership, seem very likely to achieve political or legislative change.¹⁵

Exposing the fraudulence of the first novel of Australia: *The Forger's Wife's* revision of *Quintus Servinton*

Lang's views on the English novel are most systematically expressed in *The Forger's Wife* (1855), an eventful story of marital relations, forgery, bushrangers, and the realities of life in a Sydney penal colony. Originally published in *Fraser's Magazine* from July to December 1853 as *Emily Orford*, *The Forger's Wife* was still remembered by English readers in 1869.¹⁶ It was part of the wave of "Australian" novels that entered the English fiction market in the mid 1850s,¹⁷ such as G. H. Haydon's *The Australian Emigrant: a Rambling Story, containing as much fact as fiction* (1854), or Catherine Helen Spence's *Clara Morrison: a Tale of South Australia during the Gold Fever* (1854).¹⁸

This was a crucial period in the self-definition of Australian fiction.¹⁹ Elizabeth Perkins explains how "Australian writing before 1855" used "readily recognised" novel forms to convey to an English and colonial readership "a new natural and social environment" ("Colonial Transformations" 139). Patrick Morgan notes that after 1855 there was a "movement towards realism" (238). In Elizabeth Webby's view, novels of Australia were distinguished in the mid 1850s by their blurring of "rigid distinctions between varieties of prose" ("Writers, Printers, Readers" 120). English Victorian readers wanted reportage. In *Clara Morrison*, the

Athenaeum wholeheartedly approved of the “air of truthful, unexaggerated reality in all the details,” but it dryly observed how Haydon’s “bushmen pick their words wonderfully [...] [with the result that] the reader’s belief is not earned.”

Even more than verisimilitude, however, verifiable truth came to characterise the ideal epistemology of the novel of Australia. *The Forger’s Wife* was in the vanguard of this development. In his preface to the 1855 book-form edition, Lang states that his novel “is not a fiction.” His story, he explains, was drawn from “letters written by the unfortunate lady,” which he received in 1839. Nancy Keesing has chased up Lang’s remark that some of the letters were sent from Moreton Bay, but she has found “no record of anyone remotely like [Lang’s forger’s wife, Emily Orford]” (94 n. 2).²⁰ But Lang also left another trail of clues. These suggest that he based *The Forger’s Wife*, in part, on the factual story that lay behind Henry Savery’s *Quintus Servinton* (1830-31),²¹ a semi-autobiographical novel about a forger’s transportation to Van Diemen’s Land and his subsequent moral reformation.²²

As “the first Australian novel” (McDonald 66), *Quintus Servinton* is the progenitor of *The Forger’s Wife*. Savery too had presented his novel as “no fiction, or the work of imagination” (Preface, *Quintus Servinton* xxxiii). We are to identify Quintus with Savery. Like Quintus, Savery was charged with forging a type of credit note (“Criminal Trials,” *The Times* 28 Dec. 1824). But Quintus’s wife Emily is very different from Henry Savery’s wife Eliza. Emily Servinton is impossibly devoted, personally secures the virtuous Quintus’s pardon, and, eventually, the two enjoy an idyllic cottage life in Devonshire, England. By contrast, Eliza followed Henry Savery to Australia, probably cuckolded him, and left him after a few months. As a number of literary historians have commented, *Quintus Servinton* was founded on fantasy rather than fact.²³

Details of Eliza Savery's story were in the public domain. James Bonwick wrote to *Notes and Queries* in 1868 to say that, "[the] fellow-passenger who seduced Mrs. Savary [*sic*] [on her outward voyage in 1828] was a barrister." The alleged seduction "was frequently talked of in the scandalous gossip of Hobart Town" (463).²⁴ Bonwick had arrived at Hobart in 1841 (Hadgraft, *Hermit* 27). The scandal surrounding Mrs. Savery might therefore have communicated itself to the mainland before Lang left on 17 April 1842. News of Savery's death on 6 February 1842 would have offered a suitable occasion.²⁵ Lang could also, of course, have heard of these incidents at almost any time prior to his writing *The Forger's Wife* in 1853. Furthermore, the alleged seducer of Mrs. Savery was Algernon Montagu, Mrs. Savery's appointed protector. He became Puisne Judge of Van Diemen's Land in 1833 and was removed from office at the end of 1847 (Hadgraft, *Hermit* 36). It is highly probable that Lang, a Sydney barrister, would have known of such a prominent Australian legal figure and his questionable personal and professional history.

Lang wrote his Australian fiction of the 1850s in England. Keesing suggests that he received "letters and perhaps books and pamphlets from family and friends in Australia," and that he made use of old Australian newspapers (101). *The Forger's Wife* mentions the *Monitor*, *Gazette* and *Australian*. These scattered references plainly acknowledge the Australian newspaper as a major source of information about Australian life.²⁶ Indeed, *The Colonial Times* and the *Hobart Town Gazette* reported on Savery's high-profile activities in the colony. *Quintus Servinton* was advertised in the *Hobart Town Courier* and the *Tasmanian* (Hadgraft, *Quintus* xxiii). And on 4 September, 2 October, and 30 October 1840, the *Hobart Courier and Van Diemen's Land Gazette* reported on "the well known Mr. Savery['s]" further forgeries, his attempted flight, and his subsequent trial.

Lang's scholarly approach to recreating the Australia of the 1820s and 1830s, moreover, could easily have led him to the *Athenaeum*'s review of the English edition of *Quintus Servinton* (published by Smith and Elder in 1832). The review begrudgingly recommends the third volume for its sanitised accounts of transportation and life in the colony, and was therefore of obvious potential use to Lang's project. The review also points to the novel's origin in "the fate of a Bristol merchant, whose case, at the time, excited considerable interest," and which was detailed in seven editions of *The Times*, from December 1824 to April 1825. It would have been surprising if Lang, either in Australia or England, had not read the first Australian novel. Although it is impossible to determine categorically whether Lang availed himself of some or all of these opportunities to acquaint himself with details of Savery's story, his novel, or both, Lang nevertheless had considerable access to them.

The plot details of *The Forger's Wife* strongly suggest that Lang knew both Savery's story and his version of it in *Quintus Servinton*. Lang's forger is Charles Roberts, alias Reginald Harcourt. The advertisement for the Australian recapture of Harcourt gives his age as "'33'" (111),²⁷ exactly the same age as Savery's at the time of his conviction and, almost certainly, of his arrival in the colony ("Criminal Trials," *The Times* 6 Apr. 1825). Savery's transportation ship was the *Medway* (Hadgraft, *Quintus* xvi); Harcourt's is the *Medora* (111). Harcourt tries to escape to America (661), as Savery and Quintus did ("Criminal Trials," *The Times* 13 and 28 Dec. 1824; *Quintus* 245-49). All are caught in the attempt. Harcourt's captain's rank and profligacy, moreover, appear to be influenced by the passages concerning Quintus's encounter with Captain Spendall, which were quoted in the *Athenaeum* review. Both Quintus and Harcourt have a professional connection with the West Indies (*Emily Orford* 104; *Quintus* 87-88, 97-99, 181-82, 190-92), as did Savery ("Criminal Trials,"

The Times 13 Dec. 1824).²⁸ Emily Orford first meets Harcourt in Devonshire, the idealised bucolic home of Quintus and Emily that frames *Quintus Servinton*.

The Forger's Wife critiques Savery's account of his colonial experience.

Among the first targets are Emily Servinton's naivety and devotion to Quintus. While Savery's "Secretary of State" is "a patient and courteous listener to whatever [Emily Servinton] had to say" (*Quintus* 387), Lang's "Home Secretary could not, of course, listen" to Emily Orford's intercessions on her convict husband's behalf (107). Unlike Savery's eponymous hero, but, significantly, like Savery himself, Harcourt continues his forgeries in Australia and is convicted. In Lang's novel, Savery is portrayed as a cynical self-serving opportunist who, in an attempt to secure his own advancement in the colony and, eventually, his pardon, pimps his own wife to the police magistrate, Mr. Brade (328-30).²⁹ As George Flower, the Australian thief-taker, tells Emily, Harcourt's "'outside is like that of a gentleman; but within he is low, and tainted'" (233): precisely the impression that emerges from *The Times*'s record of Savery's examination and trial, and which Savery's novel attempted to dispel. Harcourt, in composing his missive to Emily's father after their elopement, illustrates precisely the "'low'" cunning behind Savery's self-presentation in *Quintus Servinton*: he will "'try a penitent touch [...] [and] give 'em a *quasi pro confesso* go of the pathetic'" (103). *The Forger's Wife* thereby satirises Savery's claim that *Quintus Servinton* is "a biography, true in its general features, and in its portraiture of individuals" (Preface xxxiii).

***The Forger's Wife* and the English romance's forgeries of discourse**

The Forger's Wife was right to be concerned by the intrinsic dishonesty of *Quintus Servinton*. Savery's motive for writing his novel (1830-31) could not have been hard for Lang to deduce. As Michael Ackland baldly states in volume 230 of the *DLB*, "[w]ith his sights set on a ticket of leave, Savery refashioned his life story [...]" (342). In January 1832, Savery petitioned the Colonial Secretary for a ticket-of-leave.

Quintus Servinton secured for Savery the following testimonial from one James Grant:

[...] I think I know more of his principles from his writings than any other source, and will here quote the observation I made audibly on closing the book after reading thro' – "If Mr. Savery wrote this Book [i.e. *Quintus Servinton*] he cannot be a bad man, and I think he has atoned for his offence against Public Justice." (qtd. in Hadgraft, *Quintus* xxiii-xxiv)

On the strength of such recommendations, Savery was granted his ticket-of-leave.³⁰ In a sense that Bulwer-Lytton would have recognized, *Quintus Servinton* seems to have entered legal discourse and affected a specific judicial decision. *Quintus Servinton* had successfully passed off Savery as a wholly reformed criminal. But public attitudes towards criminality had become markedly more deterministic by the early 1850s (Wiener 163-67). From Lang's standpoint, we may assume, Savery was always going to be a forgery statistic. In fact, as Lang would surely have known, Savery did indeed continue his forgeries in Australia.³¹ Legal discourse, in this instance, appears to have been duped by a novel written by an habitual forger.

If so, did that mean that *Quintus Servinton* was another of Savery's forgeries? Certainly, the metaphor is deeply embedded in the novel. Mr. Gordon, an attorney, explains to an apparently incredulous Quintus that "the circulation of fictitious bills [...] bearing the name of a person who never existed, except in the fancy of him who

issued it [...] [is, nevertheless,] forgery” (231-32). In the attorney’s language, a forged signature on a bill becomes rather like a character created by a novelist’s imagination and put onto paper. The word “circulation,” moreover, recalls Savery’s comments about the circulation of his novel in his preface (xxxiv). Savery obviously knew that novel writing could be likened to the crime for which he had been transported. Reading Mr. Gordon’s words, Lang - lawyer and novelist - could hardly have failed to spot the connection made so explicitly by Savery himself.³²

Whereas *Quintus Servinton* had given readers such as James Grant the imaginatively forged contours and curlicues of Savery’s fictitious moral character, *The Forger’s Wife* had, from Lang’s perspective, revealed the rather different and authentic character against which they might be compared. The calligraphy that Savery employed for his deception, however, was the English pastoral romance and morality tale.³³ As the *Athenaeum* said of *Quintus Servinton*, “at least the first two volumes, might have been written here or anywhere – it is compounded after the old receipt, and is very like a hundred other novels [...]” The third volume (set in Australia) made the reviewer “nauseate a little at so much unadulterated virtue.” For *The Forger’s Wife*, I hope to show, the literary issue was less whether *Quintus Servinton* would still have been a forgery if Savery had been absolutely truthful in his narrative, than whether the English romance could ever be anything *but* a forgery-like literary mode, especially for the novel of Australia.

Why, we may ask at this point, was it so important for Lang to expose Savery as a “forger of credible fictions” (Ackland 343)? According to Lang’s English romances, readers did not take much notice of romances, and lawyers were heedless of the voices of imaginative literature. Lang’s romances indeed offer an extraordinarily limited conception of the novel’s role in society. But these novels’

mutterings of abnegation are suspicious. Was Lang writing in these romances less in the persona of a novelist, than as a lawyer interloping in the realm of literature, and putting them in their proper epistemological place? Although Lang's romances protest their discursive limitations too much, they nevertheless indicate how *The Forger's Wife* approached the matter of *Quintus Servinton's* forgeries of Savery's moral condition: as an issue of discursive agency, rather than as one of pure representation. *The Forger's Wife*, I suggest, displays an anxiety about how the English romance mode could mislead readers into seeking to carry its fraudulent propositions into legal or political discourse. Within the Australian context, this anxiety was well founded. James Grant had done precisely this.

Emily's seduction by Harcourt is presented in terms of the relationship between the English romance and an English female reader. In Australia, Emily reads Harcourt's detailed physical description in the advertisement for his recapture. At one point, Harcourt even remarks, "I am a strange fellow [...] and I shall be the same to the end of the chapter" (102). From the very beginning of *The Forger's Wife*, Harcourt offers Emily a romantic tale - the "charming" (99), gambling, amorous and dashing army captain - and "[she] fainted on his shoulder" (102). He is repeatedly associated with writing in the novel; she is nearly always at the mercy of his words: "[she] was seldom proof against the eloquence of her husband" (330). Whereas in the preface to *Quintus Servinton* Savery envisages his novel as taking the reader on a journey (xxxiii), in *The Forger's Wife*, this relationship is allegorised as a young lady's genteel elopement with a man who turns out to be a forger.

Harcourt's identity within the novel is a fraud. He is neither an officer, nor a gentleman, nor Captain Reginald Harcourt: he is Charles Roberts, the "contemptible forger" (232) - a "flash fellow" (111).³⁴ Emily illustrates the extent to which young

readers of a romance can be gullible. Harcourt's wearing of Emily's clothing (104-05) is a grotesque metaphor for how the romance – in the senses of both the novel and its courtship of the reader – hollows out the reader's identity and inhabits her with its own "stamp" (330), its psychological and emotional imprint. The image hypothesises, tentatively, the romance's psychic usurpation of the incautious young reader. For Victorian critics in the 1850s, this was indeed a concern. In his 1858 review of Sir Walter Scott's *Waverley Novels*, Walter Bagehot expressed a commonly held fear that "the great readers of fiction," by which he specifically meant "young people," might imperil their intellect and morality through their "'addiction' [...] to romance" (26). Emily is seduced by Roberts's misrepresentation of his identity and character. He embodies that which, in "The Relation of Novels to Life" (1855), James Fitzjames Stephen decried as the novel's "falsifi[cation] of the representation of what is actually described" (102).

Fitzjames Stephen's article and Lang's novel (in book form) were published in the same year. In different ways, they are two texts written by barristers about the novel's discursive function in society. Fundamentally, Fitzjames Stephen's argument is that the novel's primary cultural function is to entertain and, in consequence, the novel can exist qua novel only by "a great deal of *suppressio veri*, whence arises [...] *suggestio falsi*" (100). He asks, by way of example: how does the novel attempt to engage with the law? In his discussion on the textual representation of criminal trials, Fitzjames Stephen sets Scott's *Waverley Novels* against a quasi-official record, the *State Trials* series. By the law, Fitzjames Stephen means the formalised dynamic of legal debate generated through "the rules of evidence, or procedure" (101). His conception of the law here comes close to the definition offered by the legal philosopher, Dennis Patterson, in 1996: the "use" of "forms of legal argument [...] in

practice is the law” (181). Fitzjames Stephen implies that while Scott’s novels may convey to the reader an impression of the experiential characteristics of “what a real criminal trial was like” (101), the *State Trials* would convey “the interminable length of the indictments, the apparently irrelevant and unmeaning examinations and cross-examinations of witnesses, the skirmishing of counsel on points of law [...]” (ibid.). The *State Trials* series, while “intolerably tedious” to “anyone who seeks mere amusement” (ibid.), is not so for the lawyer searching for legal argument and process. Fitzjames Stephen implies that the law’s agents recognise the law essentially in those textual records ordained by the law to reflect the law’s ontology.³⁵ By choosing the example of a law report or a trial transcript, Fitzjames Stephen could have easily made his argument even stronger. But to have done this would have been too clumsy: Fitzjames Stephen’s comparison of the *State Trials* series with the *Waverley Novels* enabled him carefully to separate the shades of grey between the epistemologies of the novel and the law.

Fitzjames Stephen’s understanding of the law and its textual manifestations leads him to conclude that Scott’s *Waverley Novels* falsely claim to enter the discourse of the law. What novels actually offer the reader, he argues, is “the reality” of the “mere *coup d’oeil*” (ibid.) of the courtroom. Fitzjames Stephen’s choice of adjective, “mere,” seeks to expose the legal hollowness of the courtroom spectacle that the novel misrepresents as the law’s “use” (in Patterson’s sense of the word). The novel’s representations of the law, in Fitzjames Stephen’s view, do not actually engage with the identity of the law by which the law authenticates itself. Fitzjames Stephen’s analysis – which was, as I explain later in this chapter, challenged by Dickens and other contemporaries – avers that the *Waverley* trials only engage with the *problem* of how the novel can engage with the law.

In *The Forger's Wife*, Harcourt – the emblem of the English romance – is firmly rejected by the voices of legal and political discourse as a forger and “impostor” (104). Harcourt is tried in the Central Criminal Court for forging a deed that sought to defraud the Bank of England for £7,850. The “great point in dispute” was “the proof of Roberts’s identity” (106). Could the romancer be identified as a forger or not? Harcourt/Roberts is, of course, convicted as charged. After his sentence of transportation is passed, Emily goes to see George Hastings, a barrister, to see what can be done. Hastings knew Harcourt/Roberts as his articled clerk, and privately regards him as “the most artful and worthless villain” (106). In the penal colony, when he is working as an assigned convict clerk, Harcourt/Roberts is equally fraudulent in his practice (408). Before his trial in England, he tells Emily, “Don’t oppose my going into Parliament any more” (105), and in Australia he boasts of his “having great parliamentary influence” (111). But Emily’s father, a prominent MP, sees him for the “swindler” (103) he is, and the Home Secretary ignores him (107). Allusively running through the plot and imagery of *The Forger's Wife* is the idea that, according to legal and political discourse, the romance can only circulate within them as a deceiver. Appropriately enough, when Harcourt is recaptured in Australia, he is found carrying “a forged certificate of freedom” (224). Subtly, *The Forger's Wife* prefigures Fitzjames Stephen’s argument in “The Relation of Novels to Life.”

The possibility of a colonial alternative

The man who recaptures Harcourt/Roberts is George Flower, the bluff, brave, violent, honest, and expressly Australian thief-taker. His speech is characterised as “a volume of words and phrases” (403) and, during his brief visit to England at the end of the

novel, he is emphatically marked out as a colonial linguistic entity. His speech is peppered with aboriginal vocabulary, such as ““bidgee” (good)” or ““narang” (small)” (667). After Flower has recaptured Harcourt/Roberts, he tells Emily, ““I got in [...] while you were reading”” (225) To Harcourt/Roberts, he says, ““I heard you, you dog, tell her those falsehoods”” (ibid.) Finally, we are told that, ““Something assured [Emily] that Flower was an honest man at heart, though he was perpetually priding himself on his own rascality”” (226). The entire episode may be read as a biblio-drama in which the fraudulent English romance is taken to task, for the benefit of the naïve young reader, by rough Australian realism.

When the narrator describes Flower’s saddle, he is obliged “(to use Flower’s words)” (667). In this parenthesis and elsewhere, *The Forger’s Wife* registers its desire for a distinctly Australian voice to narrate Australian realities. Lang’s own journalistic writing suggests that this was the way of writing about Australia that he himself preferred. In 1842 he wrote *Legends of Australia* (in Australia) and, in 1859, several Australian stories drawn from real-life for *Household Words*.³⁶ Flower, “a great orator by nature” (410), is presented in *The Forger’s Wife* as a sincere and straightforward writer of Australia. Revisiting the skeleton of a bushranger he has shot in a ““fair fight”” (402), Flower briefly writes the man’s name, Millighan, and his story, “on a piece of paper with a pencil” (664). He concludes it with the words ““George Flower wrote this himself.”” (664-65). In so doing, he establishes himself as the authentic recorder of Australia’s brave men. By contrast, Harcourt’s writing of names – and therefore identities – is wholly fraudulent. Entering into Harcourt’s thoughts before he forges a cheque, the narrator muses, “With whose name should he take the liberty? That was the question” (408). The opposition is absolute: Flower’s

writing is true and factual (as the genuine Australian novel's must be); Harcourt's is false and fictional (as the fraudulent English romance is).

The way in which the events of the growing Colony were recorded mattered, even (or perhaps especially) to its outlaws. Before his death, the bushranger Millighan had shown a prescient consciousness of his place in “the annals of this blessed country” (339). He had asked Flower to leave his body unburied. His skeleton and the bullet that killed him remain in the bush as monuments to his life history. Flower likewise wishes for this sort of integration with the Australian landscape. He embraces the bushranger's poetic request, “Let me lie here in this lonely region, and let my bones bleach in the sun, and the rain fall, and the moon and stars shine upon them” (403). Through Flower, *The Forger's Wife* projects a hopeful image of what an authentic Australian novel might be: laconic and fast-paced, terse in structure, steadfastly Australian in its diction and grammar, and faithfully evocative of both the spirituality of the colony's land and the harsh realities experienced by its tough, adventurous and resourceful people.³⁷

Flower concludes his epitaph of the bushranger with the words, “My hand writing is well known” (665). He confidently assumes that his handwriting is not only immediately recognisable to his fellow Australians, but beyond the reach of the forger's hand. Harcourt actually does forge Flower's signature (660), and he eventually becomes a bushranger; but his forgeries are discovered and Flower finally shoots him dead (663). Flower is presented consistently as not only the emblem, but also as the successful guardian, of authentic Australian writing. In order to collect his reward for bushrangers whom he has had to shoot, Flower has to get someone to authenticate the body officially. (After many days' ride to the police station in the blazing sun, dead bodies, we are informed, are unrecognisable.) Flower is sensible

that ““frauds in dead bodies have been done by constables”” (410), and he is determined to avoid attracting this accusation himself. In the bush, a retired major checks the description of the dead man, Drohne, against the details of the wanted notice. Within the narrative, Flower’s scrupulous honesty in his representations of Australian bushrangers is officially authenticated.³⁸

The discursive agency of *The Forger’s Wife*

Fraser’s Magazine located *The Forger’s Wife* (as *Emily Orford*) within the discourse of Australian nationalist politics and English legislation. A bracketed note precedes the descriptions of Flower and the bushrangers, and, more immediately, of Harcourt’s procuring of Emily for Brade:

[...*Emily Orford* is the story of the life of real personages, and faithfully represents what was, and inevitably would be under any circumstances, the tone of morality in a convict colony. At the present time, when the subject of Penal Colonies is under discussion, information conveyed under a thin veil of fiction cannot fail to be interesting.] (*Emily Orford* 326)

The reference to the topicality of Lang’s novel is picked up later in a political essay in the same September issue. “The Session and the Ministry” evaluates the achievements of Lord Aberdeen’s ministry, including those of Lord Palmerston at the Home Office:

The almost entire abolition of transportation was another work waiting to be done, which the present Government has accomplished [...] Yet, whatever may be our embarrassment in finding a substitute for transportation, we plainly had no right to sacrifice the interests, or even the feelings, of the colonists to our own [...] (368-69).

The essay refers to the abolition of transportation to Van Diemen’s Land in 1852.

Transportation to New South Wales had ended in 1840 (Hirst 238). Convicts could still be transported to Western Australia - until 1867 - but very few were (ibid. 263).

In the bracketed commentary preceding *Emily Orford*, *Fraser's* connects the transportation of convicts, regardless of year, to low moral standards in a colony. Repeatedly, the factual basis and truthfulness of *Emily Orford* is emphasised. *Fraser's* presents the depiction of immorality in *Emily Orford* as proof of the mores engendered by transportation. Lang's novel is thus interpolated with the magazine's support, in "The Session and the Ministry," of recent government legislation on transportation. Both pieces also promote the notion of a distinct Australian identity, one that ought to be respected. In effect, *Fraser's* takes a loosely woven political essay, and threads *Emily Orford* into its discursive patterns.

But how much discursive agency did Lang himself assume his fiction had, could have, or ought to have? At the beginning of *The Forger's Wife*, his narrator notes that if a lawyer were "to move a jury," he had to do so "by figures of speech and impassioned discourse" (99). As this statement is made within a novel, Lang must have been aware that novels often used the same rhetorical devices by which legal discourse achieved legal conclusions. Though there are fundamental differences between them, both "realms" could parley in the same language. The sort of Australian novel symbolised by George Flower, moreover, is envisaged as possessing a discursive validity equal to that of any manifestly non-fictional narrative of Australia.³⁹ Lang's goal as a novelist of Australia, at this time, appears to have been a fusion of the two types of narrative form at the epistemological level. Certainly, *The Forger's Wife* was cognizant of, and capable of accommodating, the possibility of a discursive engagement with law and politics. That *Fraser's Magazine* actually used it so further supports this conclusion.

Lang's own comments on the discursive agency of his Australian fiction, however, were ambiguous. In his preface to *Botany Bay* (1859), his collection of real-

life Australian convict tales, Lang recorded his radically revised position on Australian politics. In 1842 he had, he says, “propounded in public that the colony [of New South Wales] was not ripe for any government save that of a purely Crown government” (6). But at the time of writing, he confessed, he deeply regretted this “youthful indiscretion” (ibid.). In the preface to *Botany Bay*, Lang clearly connected his Australian fiction to the discourse of nationalist politics. And yet, by 1859, Lang had, it seems, his doubts about the discursive agency of his fiction. Although both the prefaces of *The Forger’s Wife* (1855) and *Botany Bay* claim that the fiction they precede is about “altered” or “disguised” real events in Australia, the latter preface insists that the tales that follow “form merely a work of fiction” (5). Gone is the earlier preface’s bold statement that *The Forger’s Wife* is “not a fiction.” In its place, is Fitzjames Stephen’s damning adjective in adverbial form: “merely.” *The Forger’s Wife*’s optimistic hopes for Australian fiction were not sustained in Lang’s later writings.

Entwined with politics and law, Lang’s literary career raised important questions about which kinds of Victorian fiction could – and could not - achieve a discursive relationship with politics or law, and, if any could, how this relationship might be achieved. Central to this wider exploration, and a marker of Lang’s moment of fragile confidence in the possibility of Australian fiction’s discursive agency, was the novel that he based on a real-life forger, *The Forger’s Wife*. From its relatively marginal position in relation to English fiction of the 1850s, *The Forger’s Wife* expressed the opinion that a large section of Victorian fiction - the romance - had good reason to worry about its ability to engage with legal and political discourse.

4.2 Provis, *The Woman in White*, and the Insignificance of Discursive Illegitimacy

If anything, though, Lang's targeting of the English romance was too specific. *The Woman in White* had similar doubts. Collins's novel came to explore these, and eventually to expunge them, through the story of a very different real-life forger. Collins had used a real-life forger for his fiction before: "A Paradoxical Experience" (1858) was transparently about the life of Henry Fauntleroy.⁴⁰ Collins was also remarkably responsive to those legal cases of the eighteen fifties with sensationalist elements.⁴¹ John Sutherland's persuasive account of how the trial, in 1856, of William Palmer, the Rugeley poisoner, could have inspired *The Woman in White* allows for the possibility that Palmer's forgeries of bill acceptances lay behind Sir Percival Glyde's registry forgery ("Wilkie Collins" 250). But perhaps the plot of a man forging a marriage entry in order to secure a baronetcy and estates owes more to the trials of Thomas Provis.⁴² Through the close personal and professional relationship that Wilkie Collins enjoyed with Dickens during the period 1853-1860,⁴³ it is very likely that he would have known of the Thomas Provis story.

Thomas Provis and *The Woman in White*

Thomas Provis, who was accused in the civil trial of being the illegitimate son of Sir Hugh Smyth, forged a marriage register (a bible) to establish himself as the heir to country estates, as does the illegitimate Percival Glyde. Glyde's mother's secret, according to Mrs. Catherick, was that she had already married a man in Ireland (543), circumstances similar to those that Provis had claimed of his fictitious mother, Jane Vandenberg (Provis 17). Provis had insisted moreover, that the Warminster parish

register, which allegedly recorded his mother's death, had been tampered with when there was found to be no such entry. Glyde tampers with the Old Welmingham register and Hartright finds no record of the entry that he expects to see in Mr. Wansborough's "duplicate register" (519). Most of all, the Provis story would have offered Collins a powerful example of both the enormous epistemological boldness of the forger's crime and the ease with which it could be committed. Hartright, the narratives' editor, certainly seems peculiarly struck by the contrast between the "paltry means" (the act of forgery) and "the magnitude and daring of the crime that it represented" (521). He is "overwhelmed" by the transformative power of the forger's pen, the way in which it can construct for the forger an entire socio-economic existence.

In one key respect, Provis was an unrepresentative choice of real-life model. David Morier Evans's *Facts, Failures, and Frauds* (also published in 1859), offers a rogues' gallery of the forger more typical and worrying to the public around this time: the financial forger. Based on newspaper and trial reports, Evans's volume is a compendium of true stories of 1850s City forgers.⁴⁴ Walter Watts, a cheque-clerk at the Globe Assurance Office, forged bankers' passbooks to spend on the Marylebone theatre. Sentenced to ten years' transportation in 1850, he hanged himself in Newgate (74-105). William James Robson, a clerk in the Crystal Palace Company, committed forgeries relating to the transfer of share certificates to finance a lavish West End lifestyle. Like Watts, he was passionate about the theatre, wrote plays, and tried to become an actor. When his forgeries were discovered in 1856, he fled to Copenhagen in disguise. Tracked down by an Elsinore inspector, he was brought back to England, where he was sentenced to transportation for twenty years (391-431). Less colourful, but of greater psychological interest, was Leopold Redpath. Although

he defrauded the Great Northern Railway of £240,000, his lifestyle was modest, and he gave considerable sums to charitable causes and the arts. As Evans concludes, this was “spurious charity” (441). Redpath forged in order to present himself as a kind-hearted and generous man. When his forgeries were discovered, he fled to Paris, but then gave himself up. He too was sentenced to transportation (432-83). Evans also featured John Sadleir, whom Dickens and Trollope incorporated into their fiction. Collins, in choosing Thomas Provis as his real-life inspiration for Glyde, directed fictional forgery away from its characteristically financial context.

Glyde’s textuality

In a trailblazing manoeuvre, Collins took forgery into questions of identity. Sir Percival Glyde is actually a fictional persona created by an illegitimate writer – in the double sense of a bastard and a forger – whose true identity has been obliterated by the fraudulent reconstruction of his legal status.⁴⁵ And, within the imagery of the novel, Glyde possesses an identity that is primarily conceptualised in terms of printed text. Glyde’s “solid English words” (329) have an impact on Laura and Anne like that of print on paper. The “lurking insult” underneath “the mere surface-brutality” of Glyde’s words to Laura, leaves a “mark” of “profanation so plainly on her face that even a stranger might have seen it” (250). Correspondingly, “the marking ink” on “each article of [Anne’s] underclothing,” which denotes Glyde’s imprisonment of her, is “as plain as print” (436). In turn, the women’s habitual wearing of “plain white” (54) connects them to paper. (In the mid-nineteenth century, people’s clothing, as rags, was the chief constituent of paper.⁴⁶) The text’s references to Glyde, Laura and Anne are remarkably self-referential.

Critical readings generally take the obtrusive materiality of the woman in white back, however, into a metaphorical discourse of patriarchal oppression. Gwendolyn MacDonagh and Jonathan P. Smith, for example, see Anne as “a blank page to be written on by men” (281), and Diane Elam modifies this position by asserting that, despite the efforts of both Hartright and Glyde, Anne is “unconstrained by narrative” (57). But Collins was undoubtedly interested in the paper and bindings of books, and in how books (and magazines) related - as physical objects – to human psychology (Baker 1-5). What must we make of the fact that Glyde, Laura and Anne narcissistically refer to the novel’s own imaginative construction of patriarchal discourse?⁴⁷

In *The Woman in White*, the fictional quality of the novel (its printed words) – as opposed to its essential materiality (the paper on which the words are printed) – is unequivocally associated with Glyde. The fact that he is a forger seems to be *The Woman in White*’s confession of its anxiety that, like Glyde’s forgery, the text might only refer to itself, despite its ability to deceive even the most sensitive of its readers into believing that it is fundamentally engaged with the discourse of mid-Victorian patriarchy; that, like Glyde, it fraudulently fabricates for itself “a whole social existence” (521). Although the detail of Provis’s marriage register forgery probably feeds into Glyde’s personal history, it is perhaps also the germ of *The Woman in White*’s fundamental questioning of the epistemological validity of its own representations.

Authentic discursive engagement

But what is a legitimate or authentic engagement with the discourse of patriarchal oppression? As Glyde's forgery's having escaped detection for twenty-three years illustrates, identifying the forged text through a method independent of the novel's own confession of its forgery is almost impossible. For a tentative definition of an authentic or actual textual participation in the discourse of patriarchal oppression, however, it is perhaps instructive to consider the cultural context in which *The Woman in White* was circulating. Written the year after *The Woman in White* was published as a novel, John Stuart Mill's essay "The Subjection of Women" (written in 1861) perhaps exemplifies the way in which texts other than novels might achieve an engagement with the discourse of patriarchal oppression.

The difference, like Glyde's forgery, is slight and difficult to detect authoritatively, but it lies somewhere in the commonplace fact that society privileges particular narrative forms. Mill's essay is a political tract self-evidently aimed at legislative change. Indeed, in its first published form (1869), Mill specifically aligned the essay with his personal delivery to the House of Commons of the Petition for the Extension of the elective franchise (to include, among other disenfranchised groups, women), in June 1866 (484 and n.). Only in the form of political pamphlets, Mill's essay implies, can feminist participation in the discourse of patriarchal oppression result in legislation, society's guarantee of an eventual shift in social practice.⁴⁸

In its attempts to steer readers' sympathies towards Laura and Anne, *The Woman in White* certainly *appeals* to the discourse of patriarchal oppression. But the law's voices do not generally regard the novel's participation in the discourse of patriarchal oppression as being on the same epistemological basis as that of Mill's

essay. As James Fitzjames Stephen insisted in “The License of Modern Novelists” (1857), the novel’s fraudulence lay in its being essentially an imaginative product that, unaccountably and at whim, associated and disassociated itself with legal discourse.

The discursive relativity of *The Woman in White* and the law

Although this model of discursive authenticity is certainly contestable, it is nevertheless the sort within which *The Woman in White* seeks to locate itself. A juridical framework surrounds the novel’s appeal to the discourse of patriarchal oppression. Despite the apologetic 1861 preface, the novel overtly seeks the patronage of the law in its claim to employ the law’s primarily rationalist methodology in order “to present the truth” (5). Hearsay, Hartright claims, will be excluded. He will, however, generally stick to the Benthamite principle of evidential inclusiveness. Apparently, Hartright demarcates the discursive space that is, in law, the courtroom.

Indeed, through him, the evidence is mediated by a claimed rationalist objectivity that in fact conceals a personal, and possibly dubious, motive. It is John Sutherland who notes (though without explicitly making the connection) that Hartright’s mediation of his evidence serves his own interests, just as the law’s conviction – on purely circumstantial evidence – of the poisoner William Palmer in 1856 appeared to serve *its* own narrowly political interests. At the Palmer trial, which Sutherland believes Collins had attended, the law obligingly satisfied the state’s desire for Palmer’s conviction (“Wilkie Collins”). In a similar movement, Hartright gets Laura and the Limmeridge estates (Sutherland, Introduction xxiii). According to *The*

Woman in White, the law's justice may be just as subjective and self-interested as an individual's desire.

Repeatedly, the novel illustrates the impossibility of the law's arrival at "truth." In her "testimony," Eliza Michelson claims that she "offer[s] facts only" (364), but her deference to her social superiors clearly affects the substance of her statement. Her remark that "Sir Percival was not civil enough" is modified (ironically, in the interests of "justice") to "not composed enough" (367). Her substitution of "composed" for "civil" dutifully strives to mask Glyde's sociopathy, as befits her status as housekeeper at Blackwater Park. The word also highlights a witness's statement as an act of composition, directed at a specific audience. Before legal interpretation can begin, "a plain fact" (452) will, in all probability, lead less to what was said or done than into the socio-economically conditioned psychology of the person narrating that "fact."⁴⁹ Yet the law, as depicted in *The Woman in White*, seems unable to acknowledge this. The lawyer Mr. Kyrle warns Hartright that "entering into [Laura's] state of mind, and deducing from it a metaphysical conclusion," will uphold in law not Hartright's true but Glyde's false account of events (452).⁵⁰

While *The Woman in White* confesses its possible forgery of patriarchal discourse, it also puts forward for itself the following plea: in terms of epistemological insecurity, just how different *is* the novel from the law in the late 1850s? Such a stance was reasonable. The changes in evidence law and procedure throughout the nineteenth century did indeed suggest that all was not right with the law's fundamentally rationalist epistemology.⁵¹ *The Woman in White* thus sowed doubts about the cultural significance of its discursive illegitimacy.⁵² Through Glyde, the illegitimate forger, *The Woman in White* therefore addressed less the question of

whether it had any discursive agency, than whether it had any *right* to possess any discursive agency. Yes, Collins's novel concluded: as much as the law did, anyway.

4.3. John Sadleir, *Little Dorrit*, and *The Way We Live Now*: Merdle, Melmotte, and Mythologies of Forging Discourse

While Wilkie Collins rejected the pantheon of 1850s City forgers in favour of Thomas Provis, Dickens wrote John Sadleir into *Little Dorrit* (1855-57) the moment Sadleir was unmasked as a forger. Trollope, by contrast, revisited Sadleir in *The Way We Live Now* (1874-75), when Sadleir had become a dim memory for the British public. What did these authors find so compelling about Sadleir? Generally, Sadleir has been regarded as one of the many real-life foundations that Dickens and Trollope used to satirise a society wrestling with early industrial capitalism, and losing its moral core in consequence.⁵³ But John Sadleir was no mere real-life criminal, *cause célèbre*, or even sign of the times. He was a mythological entity: a peculiarly powerful and protean substance with which *Little Dorrit* and *The Way We Live Now* could articulate their concerns about their discursive relation to the society they depicted. Although both novels are indeed satirical, they also speak of themselves through Sadleir. His legacy to them, I argue, was a portentous language of myth.⁵⁴

John Sadleir: facts and mythology

The facts of the forgeries of John Sadleir (1814-56) are well known.⁵⁵ The son of a tenant farmer and banker's daughter, Sadleir started out life as a Dublin solicitor. He became a director of a joint-stock bank in Tipperary, established around 1827 by his brother, James. He came over to England during the railway mania, and by 1846 he was a parliamentary agent for Irish railways, and participated in various financial ventures.⁵⁶ In 1847 he was elected MP for Carlow, and he became identified with Irish Catholic interests.⁵⁷ An acquaintance of Gladstone, Disraeli, and Lord Aberdeen, he might have been a future Chancellor of the Exchequer. In the ministry of the intensely protestant Lord Aberdeen, he held office as a junior lord for the Treasury in 1853. Although this cost him his seat at Carlow, he was elected MP for Sligo in the same year. Accused of corruption in this election, he was forced to resign his position at the Treasury.⁵⁸ Around this time, rumours about his financial irregularities were rife. By early 1856, the Tipperary Joint-Stock Bank was obviously insolvent, and its London agent-bank, Glyn & Co., refused to accept its drafts.⁵⁹ Desperate to raise money, Sadleir proposed various schemes, one of which stemmed from his membership of the Irish Encumbered Estates Commission. He presented this proposal to the finance house of Wilkinson, Gurney, Stevens & Co. It was quickly exposed as being founded on forged deeds and signatures. Sadleir wrote letters confessing his crimes, and shortly afterwards he committed suicide on Hampstead Heath by drinking poison.

After Sadleir's death in February 1856, the full extent of his frauds came to light. Through his position as director of the Tipperary Joint-Stock Bank, he had embezzled £200,000.⁶⁰ He had also issued fictitious shares in the Swedish Railway to the value of £150,000. Thousands of investors, and perhaps more, were ruined.

Despite the singular magnitude of his frauds, Sadleir was hardly an aberration in British banking practice. One of his letters, published after his death, suggested that the directors of the Royal British Bank had similarly used subscribers' funds for their own purposes.⁶¹ Sadleir's exposure as a forger and fraudster was, in fact, part of a huge pattern.⁶² Immediately before Sadleir's financial crimes were made public, the eminently respectable partners of a private bank, William Strahan, Sir John Dean Paul and Robert Bates, were found to have misappropriated their customers' money. All were sentenced to transportation for fourteen years (Evans, *Facts, Failures, and Frauds* 106-53). Presumably, this was the sort of fate that Sadleir had sought to evade by taking his own life.

Banks in the 1840s and 1850s were notoriously untrustworthy and prone to failure.⁶³ Between 1844 and 1868, two hundred and ninety-one banks were founded; in 1868, forty-nine – just sixteen per cent - were still in business (Hunt 157). Crises were alarmingly common. In 1857, for example, the collapse of American railway securities caused a run on those English banks with American interests. The subsequent Parliamentary Report revealed widespread abuses in banking practice: banks frequently issued false reports and balance sheets to cover losses and attract more customers (as Sadleir had done); time and again, banks lent money with little attempt to secure it; boards of directors were often negligent or simply incompetent. Large, impersonal, and paper-based, the system was difficult to monitor. Customers had no sure means of assessing a bank's solvency. Nevertheless, many believed investment worth the risk, for an obvious reason: between 1847 and 1857, London joint-stock banks paid out, on average, the very high dividend of ten per cent (Robb 69). Sadleir was a symptom of an entire system in which many were complicit, and his forgeries typified the wider frauds perpetrated within it.⁶⁴

To Victorian commentators on financial forgery, the decision to commit the crime was a paradigmatic one. Of William James Robson, D. M. Evans wrote:

How suddenly the thought of committing forgery first flashed upon him – how he repelled it with horror – how it returned with subtle malignity at a weaker moment – how he still rejected it – parried its returning assaults – and finally yielded to the Tempter – need not be too curiously inquired into. The temptation and the fall is an ever-recurring tragedy.

(*Facts, Failures, and Frauds* 400)

For Evans, the act of forgery is a breathless psychodrama, a real-life morality play, and a repeat performance of man's first disobedience against the Logos. Like Satan's archetypal lies, forgeries perverted the true relationship between words and their meanings. In an era in which words were increasingly located primarily within a culture of writing rather than of the spoken word, the financial forger was the most modern of Satan's disciples. Though given scant regard in recent accounts, the mythological potential of Sadleir's forged deeds and signatures defined Sadleir's criminality for many contemporaries.

Sadleir's story was legendary, and known even in the antipodes. *John Sadleir, or The Ruined Speculator* (1856) warned the young men of Melbourne that within their young city's commercial expansion lay grave dangers to their souls. Originally, the pamphlet was a sermon given on 13 July 1856, by the Rev H. Thomas. He essentially depicted Sadleir as a man of "vast intellectual powers" whose hand was "devil-guided" (2). In Thomas's view, Sadleir's "worthless forgeries" were "illustrations of the promises which the world made to him, and on which he relied" (16). Thomas vividly imagines Sadleir's thoughts as he confessed to his financial crimes. To Thomas, Sadleir's words "came so hot from his soul, that he might have feared the very paper on which he placed them would blaze up before his eyes with the lurid glare of the nether fires" (9). Thomas adds, "His bible was a treatise on

poisons” (ibid.). Thomas’s Sadleir is an educated and intelligent man who foolishly gambled, and lost, his soul for worldly gain. In *John Sadleir*, the modernity of Sadleir’s criminality is charged with the emotion and imagery of the Faust legend.⁶⁵ In Thomas’s reconfiguration of the myth, however, the protagonist’s desire is different: in place of the thirst for knowledge and experience is the Victorian pursuit of total financial power.

By contrast, in “Suicide of Mr. John Sadleir, MP” (5 Apr. 1856), *The Times* portrayed – in a series of flickering allusions - Sadleir as a fallen Christ, a fiscal messiah who had succumbed to Satan’s temptations in the moral desert of mid-Victorian high finance. Sadleir drank the poison from “a silver cup” (a literal enactment of the metaphor with which Christ, at Gethsemane, had accepted his death?). A “donkey driver” discovered Sadleir’s body “a few yards from [...] Jack Straw’s [...] inn” (phrases suggesting Christ’s birth and means of entry into Jerusalem on palm Sunday?). We read of the “flagpole” and the “hill” near where the body lay (evocations of the cross and Golgotha?). To prove his identity, Sadleir had written his name and address on “a small slip of paper” (as “INRI” headed Christ’s cross?). His body is “removed to the workhouse” (as Christ’s body was moved to the tomb?). Earlier, in “A Curious Speculation” (2 Apr. 1856), *The Times* had reported on the rumours that Sadleir had faked his own death (a death-defying feat analogous to the resurrection?). Although these allusions demonstrate Christianity’s omnipresence in Victorian culture, rather than any specific authorial intention,⁶⁶ they illustrate the ease with which Sadleir’s story became shaped by Christian myth.

Thackeray’s *Roundabout* paper, “On a Pear-Tree” (1862), offers a final example of how Victorian accounts of Sadleir sought to fit him into a particular

mythological mould. Thackeray is interested in Sadleir solely as a subject for urban folklore:

Two years since I had the good fortune to partake of some admirable dinners in Tyburnia – magnificent dinners indeed; but rendered doubly interesting from the fact that the house was that occupied by the late Mr. Sadleir. One night the late Mr. Sadleir took tea in that dining-room, and to the surprise of his butler, went out, having put into his pocket his own cream-jug. The next morning, you know, he was found dead on Hampstead Heath, with the cream-jug lying by him, into which he had poured the poison by which he died. The idea of the ghost of the late gentleman flitting about the room gave a strange interest to the banquet. (244)

Thackeray lightly places Sadleir within the eighteenth-century ballad tradition of hanged rogues. His Sadleir is sketched simply and boldly. Through the detail of his butler and his taking tea, Sadleir's gentility is stressed. The repetition of "cream-jug" (a refrain) plays on the way in which Sadleir creamed off investors' money, and, in so doing, it also alludes to the poetic justice of Sadleir's drinking poison from this "cream-jug." In this frivolous mid-Victorian adaptation of a gallows' tale, the souvenir of the dead criminal – historically an item of clothing or suchlike – is no less than Sadleir's house at Hyde Park. For Thackeray, "Tyburnia" is a place of psychic as well as physical geography, a map of the popular imagination into which Sadleir, a very recent ghostly arrival, is to be domiciled, alongside "the celebrated Mr. John Sheppard," "the well-known Mr. Fauntleroy," and "the Reverend Doctor Dodd" (244). Sadleir's story was extraordinarily receptive to a variety of mythopoeic treatments.

Before examining how Sadleir's forgeries functioned within a particular novel, however, it is worth briefly considering the aspects of Sadleir's story most likely to relate to the mid-Victorian novel. In his confessional letter to Robert Keating (MP for Waterford) on 16 February 1856, Sadleir finally saw himself as "the author of numberless crimes" (rpt. in Evans, *Facts, Failures, and Frauds* 252). And on 21 June

1856, *The Times* published a rather different letter that he had written earlier, to his brother, James:

Now, I know many of the English joint-stock banks, in order to give a good appearance to their balance, have constantly trebled the amount of their balance, & c., by making a series of entries, whereby they appeared to have assets and liabilities to four times the amount they really possessed or had. This has always been kept very quiet, and what at first was a kind of fiction became gradually to be *bona fide*. (“John Sadleir: Letter to His Brother.”)

In a sense, Sadleir was an “author” of “a kind of fiction” that was accepted as genuine by his readers. The Rev. H. Thomas saw Sadleir’s acts of writing in similar terms. Sadleir, he thundered, had “invented and circulated a fictitious capital, which purported to be representative of real money, but was, in reality, nothing more than worthless, lying paper” (17). Sadleir’s scandals offered mid-Victorian fiction an exciting story whose key motifs – authorship, invention, fictitious writing, circulation, high public office, fraudulence, and naivety on a national scale - clearly related to questions of the novel’s discursive agency.

Sadleir, Merdle, and *Little Dorrit*

Although Sadleir’s presence may be discerned in *The Story of a Stolen Heir* (1858), by James G. Bertram, and in Charles Lever’s *Davenport Dunn* (1859), his most illustrious literary incarnation is as Mr. Merdle in Dickens’s *Little Dorrit* (1855-57).

Merdle is the shadowy financier around whom society revolves. The imminent exposure of his forgeries and swindles leads him to take his own life, and leaves thousands of investors, and their dependants, ruined. In his preface of May 1857, Dickens publicly acknowledged his creative debt to Sadleir: “If I might make so bold as to defend that extravagant conception, Mr. Merdle, I would hint that it originated

after the Railroad-share epoch, in the times of a certain Irish bank [...]” (5).⁶⁷ This statement is made within the context of a wholesale defence of the truthfulness of *Little Dorrit*’s highly critical portrayal of government administration, the English banking system, and society’s collusion in this state of affairs. In Dickens’s view, the magnitude of Sadleir’s crimes, and of those perpetrated by the “Directors of a Royal British Bank” (ibid.), legitimated Merdle as a true reflection of reality. It is hard to read Dickens’s word “extravagant” as anything other than ironic.

Dickens was chiefly defending himself against the sort of views expressed in “Circumlocution *versus* Circumvention” (*Saturday Review* 22 Nov. 1856) and “Circumlocution” (*Saturday Review* 6 June 1857). These essays defended the system of government administration that Dickens had satirised in the Circumlocution Office. The second essay, certainly, was authored by one of the *Saturday*’s leading lights, the young James Fitzjames Stephen. On 18 July 1857, he went even further, labelling Dickens a “deliberate [...] falsifie[r] of facts” in “The *Edinburgh Review* and Modern Novelists” (57).⁶⁸ In *Little Dorrit*, Fitzjames Stephen argued, Dickens had tried to pass off, to a susceptible reading public, false impressions of the Civil Service as true ones. Dickens’s intention, Fitzjames Stephen maintained, was to secure arguments that the Administrative Reform Association “had failed to establish on the platform” (ibid. 58).⁶⁹ Through Fitzjames Stephen, the *Saturday* emphatically rejected the assumption, made seven years earlier in *Fraser’s*, that fiction and politics could share the same platform.

In the July 1857 issue of the *Edinburgh Review*, Fitzjames Stephen again criticised *Little Dorrit*,⁷⁰ calling the Circumlocution Office “an impersonation of the Government” (“The License of Modern Novelists” 128): a textual impostor, in other words. The “representations of novelists are not only false,” he argued, “but often in

the highest degree mischievous when they apply [...] to the facts and business transactions of the world” (ibid. 126). The word “representations” means both a portrayal and the acts of an official delegate. Novels, Fitzjames Stephen implies, inherently and deceitfully assume a discursive agency in their depictions of mid-Victorian society. His concentration on the extremely “mischievous” effects of this, moreover, is very similar to his later description of forgery as an “inconvenience to the public” (*A General View* 141). Dickens’s response to Fitzjames Stephen was to try to prove the validity of his Circumlocution Office by detailing Rowland Hill’s struggles against government administration (“Curious Misprint in the *Edinburgh Review*” 97-100). But Fitzjames Stephen’s point was less that novels must get their facts right, than that novels, by their very nature, were not bound to be factual and therefore should not, under any circumstances, be trusted as though they were some kind of socio-political essay (Eigner, “Dogmatism and Puppyism” 233). The reviewing climate into which *Little Dorrit* was born, then, was one in which terms such as “fraudulent” (“Sentimentalism” 75), or “literary swindle” (“Literature” 690), could readily be deployed against novels of socio-political criticism. In the shadows of these terms, moreover, lurked the concept of forgery.

Reviewers’ hostility to such novels had, of course, been established long before the publication of *Little Dorrit*,⁷¹ and Dickens’s novel was mindful of the sort of criticisms that were articulated with such persistence by Fitzjames Stephen in 1857. Merdle, *Little Dorrit*’s forger and swindler, embodies the text’s fascination with the possible fraudulence of its discursive agency.⁷² Merdle attracts “magnates from the Court and magnates from the City, magnates from the Commons and magnates from the Lords, magnates from the bench and magnates from the bar, Bishop magnates, Treasury magnates [...] all the magnates that keep us going” (245). This is a punning

and personified list of the major discourses of Victorian society, all of which, suggests *Little Dorrit*, actively court the novel's subtle and – according to Fitzjames Stephen – fraudulent powers of influence. When Merdle greets the “magnates” as they enter his domain, he does so with the barely perceptible hand of the forger: “His hand seemed to retreat up his sleeve” (586). In this and such other details as Merdle's “clasping his wrists as if he were taking himself into custody” (383), *Little Dorrit* playfully acknowledges that it might have forged its discursive capital.

Like Merdle, *Little Dorrit* instinctively knows its own fraudulence. But its textual reflex is an ambivalent and complex one. Merdle's forgeries create “hundreds and thousands of beggared people” (678). If Merdle personifies the novel's fraudulent discursive agency, then this is a pitiful image of a deceived readership, of those readers who disregard Fitzjames Stephen's assertion that novels give “no information, or only very false information” about life (“The Relation of Novels to Life” 100). In Fitzjames Stephen's terms, naïve readers are rather like *Little Dorrit*'s credulous speculators. If the discursive data they gather from the novel proves to be worthless, they have only their foolishly ambitious investment in the novel's discursive solvency to blame. Furthermore, Merdle's protestations that his efforts ““to accommodate Society”” (384) are unappreciated, together with the narrator's comment that Merdle is ““license[d]”” (244) by society, points to the way in which novels were largely *expected* by Victorian society to engage with socio-political discourse. *Little Dorrit* intimates that it might forge political discourse. But it also draws attention to the likely complicity of its readership.

Although *Little Dorrit* expresses doubts as to the validity of its discursive agency, it nevertheless proceeds as though an engagement with political and legal discourse were achievable.⁷³ From Dickens's point of view, it is easy to appreciate

why. The Crimean War fiasco proved to many Victorians, beyond doubt, that public maladministration had to be rectified urgently. If the Administrative Reform Association and the *Household Words* articles of 1851 and 1855 had failed to bring about the Civil Service reform that Dickens felt was necessary,⁷⁴ then the novel's perhaps less honest approach was, from his standpoint, entirely justified. The 1857 preface proudly proclaims *Little Dorrit* as a novel of political engagement.⁷⁵ If, as the language of Fitzjames Stephen's reviews implies, the Circumlocution Office was a kind of forgery – a false representation of the Civil Service that tried to pass itself off as a true one – then it was a forgery motivated by Dickens's desire to serve the public interest. Like Merdle himself, *Little Dorrit* was a phenomenon created by specific cultural conditions. What is more, the idea of a beneficent forgery was of the moment. *The Times* remarked upon how the years 1855-57 had seen, among other types of forger, "philanthropic connivers at forgery" (16 Feb. 1857).⁷⁶ *Little Dorrit* is a novel in this category.

The heavily stylised portrayal of Merdle's death certainly points to this reading. Merdle's suicide was based on that of Sadleir (Russell 147-48). But Merdle's pictorial death in the bath, and the references to "sarcophagus" and "sheet" (676), merge Sadleir's suicide on Hampstead Heath with images of the death of the French revolutionary leader, Jean-Paul Marat, in a bath. It is possible that Dickens had seen Jacques-Louis David's painting, "The Death of Marat,"⁷⁷ and scenes in *Little Dorrit* are drawn from famous paintings.⁷⁸ But Dickens's reference to Madame Tussaud's (17) in *Pictures from Italy* (1846) suggests that the influence might also come from her waxwork effigy of Marat's death. Madame Tussaud (1760-1850) established a permanent exhibition in 1833 in London, at The Bazaar, Baker Street (Bentley et al. 268). Schlicke argues that Dickens's detailed knowledge of Madame Tussaud's is

evident in *The Old Curiosity Shop* (112-14). The Marat exhibit – made under David’s personal direction – came to London in 1802 (“The Death of Marat”). It is impossible to believe that Dickens, who in the 1850s lived several streets away in Devonshire Terrace, had not seen it.

Both the waxwork effigy and David’s painting depict Marat as the slain and pen-holding patriot of the First Republic. Dickens, it seems, was implying a parallel through his allusion to Marat.⁷⁹ Had not Merdle merely done the painful duty required of him by “Society” – forging to facilitate financial speculation - and suffered accordingly? This is the attitude displayed towards Merdle in the Marat-derived imagery. Though Merdle is clearly a villain, the text’s epitaph for him is ambiguous: he is “the greatest Forger” (680). In the novel’s depiction of Merdle’s death, the life-blood of this forger replaces ink. The “tortoise-shell handled penknife” (676) with which he kills himself is “soiled, but not with ink” (ibid.). Merdle did indeed embody ideas of textual forgers and forged texts. Considered thus, the Marat imagery poses a potent rhetorical question. Was not *Little Dorrit*’s chief forgery of political discourse – the Circumlocution Office – likewise committed out of a Marat-like duty to “Society”?

Little Dorrit chiefly used Sadleir to explore the complexity of its own position as a possible forger of discourses. *Little Dorrit* melodramatically presented itself as a Romantic martyr: it had committed the crime of forging a discursive agency, but with the complicity of its readership, and for the best of motives. Merdle’s suicide is a sacrificial gesture, a confession filled with pathos: a noble and humanist admission of guilt. *Little Dorrit* is a novel certainly preoccupied with its discursive forgery, but it remains fundamentally unrepentant.

Sadleir, *The Way We Live Now*, and the fictional character of 1870s society

In the course of investigating its own fictions, *Little Dorrit* also showed how the discourses of “Society,” all of which increasingly depended on finance, were likewise built on fictions.⁸⁰ Dickens’s references to Sadleir’s forgeries illustrated how this judgement was based on fact. When the argument was expressed in a factual narrative, however, it was far stronger. The *Athenaeum* devoted over six columns to its review of *Facts, Failures, and Frauds*. What made D. M. Evans’s book so important was that it highlighted a relationship between the literary imagination and the commercial mind that was perceived to be new. As if struck with a fresh insight, the review exclaims: “we feel that the gift of wild imagination is not confined to our own class, and we hail our commercial neighbour as a man and a brother” (183). Though the tone is whimsical and ironic, the point is doggedly pursued: “[t]he merchant is not so cold, so cautious, so practical, so harsh and crabbed as dull fools suppose, but he is as easily played upon as was Apollo’s lute” (ibid.). And again, “we feel more inclined than ever to shake such guardians of property by the hand [as those who were duped by Walter Watts], and to welcome them in dream-land as men and as brothers” (184). And, from the obverse perspective, “Oliver Goldsmith would have made a very eminent merchant, director, auditor and speculator, as things go [...]” (185). In the *Athenaeum*’s opinion, the commercial world was constituted by fictions and authored by fiction-writers; the novelist and novel were now fully at home in the commercial world of the late 1850s.

This chiasmic relationship between Victorian fiction and the capitalist society it represented appeared, to some, to have come to a head by the mid-1870s. It is the major theme of *The Way We Live Now*. Trollope was a regular reader of the

Athenaeum, and had even written a review of *Little Dorrit* for the journal, though it remained unpublished (Booth 237-40). (Indeed, Melmotte's financial scams, his forgery, and his suicide, echo both Sadleir's story and Dickens's version of it.⁸¹) In *The Way We Live Now*, Melmotte instigates society's imminent collapse into a wholly fictional mode. He constantly invents illusory realities, from the South Central Pacific and Mexican Railway to Sir Felix Carbury's shares in that railway: "Mr. Melmotte was indeed so great a reality, such a fact in the commercial world of London, that it was no longer possible for such a one as Montague to refuse to believe in the scheme" (1: 84). The "universality of Mr. Melmotte's commercial genius" (1: 277) is in various ways emphasised in the narrative. Politicians, the Church, and particularly the landed gentry and aristocracy, all gravitate towards his power; in its greed, the Establishment legitimates him, and functions through him.⁸² Melmotte's forgeries symbolise perfectly how Victorian society could - almost - be dishonestly shaped entirely by the literary imagination.

Trollope seems to have been extraordinarily keen to impress this symbolism upon his readers. We are even told, "Of course he had committed forgery" (2: 135). Melmotte's forgery is obtrusive in its structural clumsiness, too. The forgery of Dolly Longstaffe's signature took place while Melmotte and Mr. Longstaffe were sharing the study in Bruton Street, where they each had a desk. John Sutherland, expressing the opinion of many readers, observes that this "shared house" device sets off a chain of the "improbable" and "implausible." ("Trollope at Work on *The Way We Live Now*" 490). Contemporary readers thought the same. The *Spectator* asked, "Why does [Melmotte] forge the order to deliver the Pickering title-deeds *before* he has tried to get back the money he settled on his daughter, which would make the forgery unnecessary?" (825). Sutherland also contends that the first rumours of Melmotte's

forgery are, from a reader's point of view, illogical ("How Criminal is Melmotte and When Was He Criminalised?" 206-07). Trollope desperately, too desperately, perhaps, wanted to say: high-financiers – Melmotte, Sadleir *et al.* - are substituting an entirely fictitious society for what should be a solid and truthful one; this is a crime against reality in which society's leading socio-economic, legal, and political voices are complicit; think of it as you would forgery.⁸³

Considering *The Way We Live Now* in his *Autobiography*, Trollope wrote, "[t]he vices implied are coloured so as to make effect rather than to represent truth" (225). Trollope was evidently trying to distinguish the fictions of *The Way We Live Now* (which do not, he said, try to represent "truth") from the Melmottian fictions of early 1870s Victorian society (which *do* seek to pass themselves off as "truth" and fact). Whereas for *Little Dorrit*, the novel's relation to political discourse was analogous to the forger, for *The Way We Live Now*, the problem was that the forgers were deep within the discursive networks of society itself. Building fictitious railways and shares, they habitually invented the world as though it were a novel, but with a literal criminality that should have been obvious to all. Society had grown soporific and greedy. It had, in the words of the *Athenaeum*'s review of *Facts, Failures, and Frauds*, been lulled by "[d]reamy imagination and lotus-eating indolence" (185) into the grand projections and speculations of the big-time crooks.

But there is no Merdle-like crash in *The Way We Live Now*.⁸⁴ One explanation for this is that Trollope was less interested in the effects of forgery on society, than in exposing the fraudulence of the particular kind of fiction it symbolises. He wants to rid his society of this omnipotent and literary kind of fictional impulse. Through Melmotte, *The Way We Live Now* offers, in a series of mythological enactments, the dissolution of the sort of literary imagination possessed by Sadleir, Watts and

Redpath. Dolly Longstaffe's unmasking of Melmotte as a forger wrecks the banquet, the intended formalisation of Melmotte's acceptance into the social order. It is made absolutely clear that Melmotte "had got into the House of Commons by false pretences" (2: 356). (On his last evening in Parliament, he is physically unable to speak there.) Melmotte's plans to buy the Pickering estate – to become rooted in the land of England – are dashed. Lastly, Trollope abandoned the idea of putting Melmotte on trial for forgery (P. D. Edwards, "Trollope Changes His Mind"), and has him commit suicide instead. Like Sadleir, Melmotte thus remains a mythological figure, transcending legal punishment.⁸⁵ In the closing sections of the novel, Melmotte is symbolically removed from socio-economic and political discourse, and then, finally, from existence. The literary imagination's *proper* place, Trollope appears to have been at pains to imply, is firmly within the novel, not in society at large.

How can we account for these textual patterns? What was going on in Trollope's mind? At some level of the Trollopian creative process that produced *The Way We Live Now*, there must have been a connection between Melmotte's entry into parliament, his Jewishness, and the beginning, in 1874, of Disraeli's second ministry.⁸⁶ Trollope had criticised Disraeli as both man and politician in *Barchester Towers* (1857) and *Ralph the Heir* (1871); his motives, however, were not unrelated to the tremendous financial success of Disraeli's novels (Mullen with Munson 122-23).⁸⁷ Long ago, Disraeli had claimed in his preface to *Coningsby* that the novel could engage with political discourse. Now, this polemical novelist, and politician of Jewish descent, was presiding over a society of which Trollope deeply disapproved. According to *The Way We Live Now*, the novel's *modus operandi* had been adopted – with disastrous consequences – by the whole of Victorian society. There could surely have been no better symbolisation, to Trollope's mind, of this dire situation than the

fact that Disraeli was again prime minister.⁸⁸ Through these issues, and built on the solid ground of Sadleir's forgeries, Melmotte came to be.

In contrast to *Little Dorrit*, *The Way We Live Now* dismissed the matter of its own discursive agency as being beside the point. Trollope's novel instead directed the question at the society whose discourses it might, or might not, connect with. It was they that were doing the forging. As a corrupt MP, junior lord of the Treasury, and omnipresent high-financier, John Sadleir illustrated the tremendously widespread fraudulence of society's discourses in the 1850s and beyond. Forgery was, for Victorian readers, a tremendously powerful and disturbing emblem of all that he stood for. Although both Dickens and Trollope each wove Sadleir into their satirical schemata,⁸⁹ they also capitalised upon Sadleir's mythologoeic potential for reasons relating to questions of discourse. They did so in ways antithetical, complementary, and strikingly inventive.

4.4. William Roupell and *Mayfair to Millbank*: Is There an Issue Here?

In Melmotte's inability to speak in the House of Commons (2: 318), we may also catch an echo of William Roupell, MP for Lambeth from March 1857 to April 1862. Like Melmotte, Roupell was a forger who had made an exhibition of himself by "his utter inability to speak" in the House of Commons ("Mr. Roupell and His Constituents"). There the similarity stops. Roupell, as many mid-Victorians would have known, came from a wealthy *nouveau riche* merchant family in Southwark.⁹⁰ In

1857, he satisfied an official committee that his election campaign did not involve bribery. In 1862, he was convicted of forging title deeds and a will, and sentenced to penal servitude. The matter of his ticket-of-leave returned him to public attention in 1869 (“Roupell: Release”). Given that reports concerning Roupell’s imprisonment appeared in *The Times* in 1872, 1873 and 1874, it is fair to say that Melmotte’s function in *The Way We Live Now* – as the emblem of an all-consuming fictionality irresponsibly unleashed onto society – owed as much to Roupell as it did to Sadleir.

But my interest in Roupell centres on an earlier and very minor novel.

Although Melmotte alludes to Roupell, Roupell is most evidently behind the central protagonist of *Mayfair to Millbank* (1870), by Richard Harris. Through its use of Roupell’s life-story, *Mayfair to Millbank* addresses two key questions pertaining to the matter of mid-Victorian novel’s discursive agency. To what extent did Roupell’s forgeries, together with his electoral corruption, symbolise for Victorian fiction a wider fraudulence in legal and political discourse? The second question relates to the fact that Richard Harris (1833-1906) was, first and foremost, a lawyer: a barrister at the Middle Temple in 1864, a circuit judge, a QC in 1888, and an author of important books on advocacy (he is still in print today).⁹¹ Fitzjames Stephen had, of course, already said much about the novel’s role in society from a lawyer’s viewpoint. But what did a *novel* authored by a prominent lawyer, and rooted in real-life forgery, have to say about the novel’s discursive agency?

William Roupell: MP, lawyer, and forger

There were many sources available to Harris for his story. These included the *Annual Register* for 1862 and 1863, *The Life of William Roupell* (1863), a trial report entitled

The Great Forgeries of William Roupell (1862), and the law reports on the legal disputes concerning the Roupell estates.⁹² But the vast majority of Harris's readers would have known Roupell through the articles on him in *The Times*. Most of these reports, which were published between 1857 and 1870, and of which there are over fifty, detail Roupell's forgeries and their legal aftermath; a few earlier reports feature his political career; and several later ones relate to his imprisonment.

In the main, Victorians would have first read about William Roupell as an MP. From political obscurity, he was put forward as a Liberal candidate for Lambeth and elected to Parliament in 1857. His reputation there was simply as a man in his mid-twenties representing a large constituency ("Sketch of Mr. Roupell").⁹³ The major domestic issue of the day was parliamentary reform. The industrial classes, despite their enormous socio-economic importance, were almost completely excluded from electoral power.⁹⁴ In 1861, just over eighteen per cent of adult males could vote in England and Wales (Hoppen, "Roads to Democracy" 554). Reports of Roupell's meetings with his constituents at the Horns Tavern, Kennington, from 1857-62, show him to have been in favour of extending the franchise to intelligent workers ("residential suffrage"), though he insisted that the impetus had to come from the people themselves.⁹⁵ According to Jonathan Parry, this stance of discussing and sanctioning parliamentary reform, while taking a reserved attitude to the business of actually achieving it, was typical of the Liberal position (210).⁹⁶

Be that as it may, the incessant talk about parliamentary representation at this time concentrated questions of enfranchisement in the public mind. The debates highlighted the distinction between two kinds of political discourse: one in which almost anyone interested could participate at some level (in the form of speeches, meetings, or pamphlets, for example), and a highly formalised kind (for which one

needed an official point of entry: the vote). Questions of which type of interest group or individual should be given the right to enter this latter kind of political discourse were debated everywhere.⁹⁷ The mechanism of this engagement was a subject for discussion, too. Roupell gave his support to the ballot, a necessary safeguard, he insisted, if the “poor man” was to be able to vote with integrity (“Roupell: Address to His Constituents”).

Roupell had little integrity himself, however. His speeches to his constituents about proposed reform legislation were made against a background of allegations that his own election to Parliament had involved bribery. A succinct account is given in

The Times:

[Roupell] had not been in the house many weeks before the ominous threat of a petition was heard, and it was speedily carried out. His election was petitioned against on the ground of corruption, and a lengthened investigation took place. Before the committee appointed to try the merits of the petition, Mr. Roupell was himself examined at great length [...] He was closely questioned with regard to his payments on account of the public-houses, and as to some underhanded preposition that had been made to him, which he repudiated [...] [by saying] “If any man were to make such a proposition to me, or to make any kind of dishonourable proposition, I would knock him down.” It is believed that the apparent frankness of that answer greatly influenced the committee in their decision, and they declared Mr. Roupell duly elected. (“Sketch of Roupell.”)

Thackeray slotted Roupell’s bravado into a classical context: “[t]he Spartan boy, who stole the fox, smiled while the beast was gnawing him under his cloak: I promise you Rupilius had some sharp fangs gnashing under his (“On a Pear-Tree” 247). The visceral agony to which Thackeray refers, however, is not so much Roupell’s knowledge of his electoral corruption, than of his forgeries, which were not to be discovered until five years later.

As Sadleir’s election in Sligo illustrates, corrupt electoral practices were not unusual in the 1850s and 1860s.⁹⁸ And Trollope’s portrayal of Barssetshire

electioneering in *Doctor Thorne* (1858) suggests the extent to which mid-Victorians were accustomed to expecting, though not necessarily condoning, corrupt practice (196-210).⁹⁹ But the fact that Lambeth was a rotten borough took on especial significance when Roupell was convicted of forgery. Upon Roupell's election to Parliament, one aggrieved Lambeth elector had complained that because "constituencies [like Lambeth] [...] virtually allowed themselves to be bought," many MPs did not represent the true political voice of their constituencies ("The Rights of Conscience in Danger"). At "the very moment" that Roupell was denying this charge of electoral corruption, "he was raising money upon deeds that he had himself forged," as one lady observer in the House of Commons remarked ("Sketch of Mr. Roupell"). With William Roupell, forgery became very obviously associated with an unlawful discursive entry into parliamentary politics.

Virtually everyone in England knew the story of the Great Roupell forgeries.¹⁰⁰ At the Surrey Assizes on 18 and 19 August 1862, William Roupell, aged thirty-one and the illegitimate son of Richard Palmer Roupell, a lead smelter in Southwark, confessed his forgery of a deed of gift, the Norbiton Park Farm estate at Kingston, that purported to come from his father. Upon his father's death in September 1856, Roupell naturally feared the discovery of this forgery. He therefore destroyed his father's genuine will, duped an octogenarian servant into being a false witness, and forged a replacement. Roupell was as cunning as the fox with which Thackeray associated him. The forged will left the aforementioned estate, together with estates at Great Warley in Essex and Roupell Park in Streatham, to his mother. William then encouraged her to believe that her husband's original will, which left all the properties in trust to his younger and legitimate brother, Richard, had been revoked on account of her late husband's wish to do justice to his wife and the

illegitimate children born to her. Easily manipulated, Mrs. Roupell relinquished all control of the estates to William, a lawyer. He raised funds against the value of the estates and, by March 1862, William Roupell had squandered most of his family's wealth on "a brief career of extravagance" ("Roupell Case" 20 Aug. 1862).

Roupell initially confessed his forgeries in a civil trial, *Roupell v. Waite*. Roupell had fraudulently conveyed property to a Mr. Waite, and his confession was intended to secure for his brother, Richard, an action of ejectment against Mr. Waite. Roupell's confession that he forged as many as ten conveyances was deemed, by some, suspicious. Was he trying to salvage part of the sold property for his brother Richard, the heir-at-law, in the hope that he might benefit, too? As it happened, the plaintiff and defendant shared the loss between them, though the legal entanglements relating to the Roupell properties continued until at least June 1865. Questions were also raised about the motive behind Roupell's forgeries. Was his illegitimacy the root of the trouble? Did William Roupell, as he himself hinted, forge the deed of gift simply to secure a provision that the law had not made for him, and of which his father would have approved?¹⁰¹

At the Central Criminal Court, on 24 September 1862, Roupell was charged by one indictment with forging a will, and by another with forging a deed. Within the space of a couple of days, he had changed his plea from "Not Guilty" to "Guilty." He sought to pass himself off as the scholar criminal, who forged to buy books and pay a debt to a friend who himself was in dire financial straits, and who was contemplating suicide. But Roupell's frauds amounted to thousands of pounds, and he came across as untrustworthy, deceitful, and eager to obfuscate. He was sentenced to penal servitude for life. After his release from Portland prison in 1876,¹⁰² he returned to south London, where he cultivated grapes (for which he won prizes); became a Fellow

of the Royal Horticultural Society; supported the causes of working-class men; and served as a colonel in the Volunteer Corps. William Roupell died, apparently a wholly reformed character, on 25 March 1909.

Roupell knew that he would be remembered solely for his forgeries. They were also his legacy to Victorian fiction. As *The Times* immediately pointed out on 20 August 1862, “Such secret frauds form the staple of a novelist’s materials.” According to the paper, however, “no writer of fiction could ever have ventured on a narrative so improbable. The trial itself, too, is as wonderful as the story in which it originated [...]” (“Roupell Case”). *The Times* presents the Roupell v. Waite trial as a re-presentation of a pre-existing story, as a narrative competitor to the novel. The report casually assumes an area of epistemological overlap between the novel and legal process. The Roupell case sharply focused this overlap, moreover, in terms of forgery, parliamentary corruption, fraudulent property transfer, and biological illegitimacy. For any novel seeking to explore how Victorian fiction might relate to legal and political discourse, the Roupell forgery case was a perfect narrative and figurative matrix.

Mayfair to Millbank: refusing to ask awkward questions about forgery, novels, and discursive agency

In the preface to *Mr. Bumpkin’s Lawsuit; or, How to Win Your Opponent’s Case* (1883), Richard Harris averred that novels could achieve changes in the law. He begins, in all seriousness, “I have endeavoured to bring the evils of our system before the Public in the story of Mr. Bumpkin” (vi). Harris continues,

The verses at the end of the story have been so often favourably received at the Circuit Mess, that I thought an amplified version of them in prose would not be unacceptable to the general reader, and might ultimately awaken in the public mind a desire for the long-needed reform of our legal procedure. (vii)

Harris is referring to delays in the legal system. In an “Advertisement,” Harris quotes from Queen Victoria’s address at the official opening of the Royal Courts of Justice on 4 December 1882. The Queen trusted that the Royal Courts would ““conduce to the *more efficient* and *speedy* administration of justice to [her] subjects”” (ix). Next, Harris lists several recent examples, from newspapers, of how these expected improvements have not, in fact, taken place. *Mr. Bumpkin’s Lawsuit* then serves as an entertaining case study, illustrating Harris’s contention in detail. The publisher of Harris’s novel was Stevens and Son, of Chancery Lane, and at the back of the volume there is an extensive alphabetical list of the firm’s current legal publications. All these elements emphatically position *Mr. Bumpkin’s Lawsuit* as a novel designed to remedy perceived deficiencies in judicial practice.

In *Mayfair to Millbank*, however, Harris took a very different approach to the question of Victorian fiction’s discursive agency. The novel’s distinguishing features were quickly identified in an unsigned review written by a young lawyer, Sir Robert Romer (1840-1918), in the *Athenaeum*. Unsurprisingly, the first is that *Mayfair to Millbank* is “drawn from life.” The events in the life of the main protagonist, Job Hawkins, mirror William Roupell’s story with tedious clarity.¹⁰³ Job is the illegitimate son of a coarse and wealthy iron founder. Job studies conveyancing; he forges his father’s title-deeds to raise money; he is an insincere, foppish and ineffectual MP in a rotten borough; he forges his father’s will, and the estates are made over to his mother; and after his father’s death, he destroys the old will. Job flees the country, but returns so that his brother can, by an action of ejectment, recover an estate that Job had fraudulently sold. The *Athenaeum* felt that the novel’s major failings were “exaggeration” (particularly in its portrayal of the Jewish moneylender, Solomon

Scaggs) and its “disregard of the laws of probability” (for example, a woman deserted by her husband lives with him as a lodger, undisguised, without his recognising her).

Mayfair to Millbank is indeed recklessly exuberant about the plasticity and inventiveness of its form. Job’s friend Edgar Hindly, the narrator tells the reader, “was actually in rapids. To drop the figurative style of expression, Edgar, before he was conscious of the fact, was in debt” (1: 136). In underlining the artifice of a trope, Harris expresses here his delight at the imaginative potential of the novel’s language. The narrator asks the reader, moreover, “Have you felt that thrill, as you dwelt with increasing pleasure (so exquisite that you almost feared to turn the leaf lest it should break the spell) on the pages of some clever, but obscure author [...]?” (1: 124-25). (Was Harris thinking of himself?) Such celebrations of the linguistic magic of the novel form, moreover, are placed in the broad context of references to authors, editors, reviewers, and readers. In *Mayfair to Millbank*, the distinctiveness of the novel’s realm is stridently upheld.¹⁰⁴ Although the Hawkins/Roupell plot encourages a fusion between legal discourse and the novel, the narrator insists that *Mayfair to Millbank* is essentially fiction. The similarity of substance serves only to emphasise the fundamental difference of form. Rather than seeking to engage polemically with the discourses of law or politics, *Mayfair to Millbank* prefers to provide an emphatically fictional mirror of their subject, William Roupell.

Not that Harris was averse to championing the novel’s discursive agency. He certainly did so in *Mr. Bumpkin’s Lawsuit*. So was *Mayfair to Millbank* an earlier expression of doubt about Victorian fiction’s discursive agency? Only one phrase - “The fertile mind of the forger” (3: 25) – suggests that *Mayfair to Millbank* wishes to align its creativity with Roupell’s forgeries. But Job Hawkins has none of the textual self-reflexivity that distinguishes Harcourt/Roberts, Sir Percival Glyde, or Merdle.

And, unlike Melmotte, Job does not symbolise an overwhelming fictional impulse in contemporary political and legal discourse. His forgeries are singular rather than representative.

Mayfair to Millbank rejects this ideal opportunity to use real-life forgery as a means to explore the question of Victorian fiction's discursive agency. It happened to be uninterested in the issue. Harris's position was this: yes, novels could enter legal discourse; but, no, they did not always do so;¹⁰⁵ and, if the question had to be asked, forgery had no automatic place in Victorian fiction's attempts to answer it.

It is tempting to dismiss *Mayfair to Millbank*'s contribution to the debate by objecting that Harris was a really a lawyer turning his hand (rather badly) to novel writing. He was nowhere near as accomplished or popular a novelist as Lang, another successful barrister. And to compare him to Collins, Dickens, or Trollope would be pointless. Nevertheless, the fact that *Mayfair to Millbank* let go of real-life forgery as a self-referential metaphor – when the Roupell case was superbly apt for this purpose – signalled the novel's fading of interest, by around 1870, in using real-life forgery cases to investigate Victorian fiction's discursive agency.¹⁰⁶

4.5 Conclusion

The question of Victorian fiction's discursive agency was most intensely discussed in the mid-1850s. Fitzjames Stephen, the most vocal commentator on Victorian fiction's relation to legal and political discourse, decried the novel's epistemological "fraudulence" in terms clearly suggestive of forgery. The forgery plot of *The Forger's Wife* anticipated Fitzjames Stephen's criticisms and tried to limit their relevance to the

English romance. *The Woman in White* nagged away at Fitzjames Stephen's accusations too, but argued that the law was just as presumptuous in its claims to be a reliable source of knowledge. Although *The Woman in White* admitted forging legal discourse, it demonstrated how the crime was little different from the law's own epistemological practice, and therefore of little import. *Little Dorrit*, the most intimately involved of these novels with Fitzjames Stephen's views on the novel's discursive agency, chiefly revelled in the imaginative potential generated by the idea of the novel as a forger of discourse. *The Way We Live Now* turned the charge on its head: *society's* discourses were far more suited to the trope of forgery than the novel. And *Mayfair to Millbank* had very little interest in exploring the issue, despite the perfect suitability of the Roupell case to do so. The drift of these positions is clear: Victorian fiction increasingly refused to envisage its relations to legal and political discourse as being akin to forgery. As Victorian fiction sought – via Savery, Provis and Sadleir – to engage with these discourses in the 1850s and 1860s, it came to appreciate how its own discursive integrity was, in certain respects, no more flawed than theirs.

Notes

¹ Even apparent exceptions conceded that this belief was widespread. In “The Relation of Novels to Life” (1855), Fitzjames Stephen haughtily concluded that “*Mary Barton* remains an excellent novel after its utter uselessness, politically speaking, is fully recognised” (116). Fitzjames Stephen is, of course, worried that many readers confer political agency upon it.

² See Slater.

³ Guy maintains that today’s critics hold essentially a similar view: “social-problem novelists [...] are seen to be implying that the novel can, and should, have an important role to play in social and political life” (4).

⁴ Bulwer-Lytton was careful to state how this should and should not be achieved, however: “descend lower into the practical questions that divide the passions of a day, and you waste all the complicated machinery of fiction, to do what you could do much better in a party pamphlet” (“Caxtoniana [Part XVI]”: 550).

⁵ Discourse may be defined as, “the abstract form of first, the language and belief which constitutes a version of reality, and second, the corresponding disciplines, institutions and political choices [...] it is a group of relations between possible objects” (R. Smith 10). For a lucid critical exposition of discourse, see Mills 29-76. Twentieth-century criticism had long supported Victorian claims for fiction’s discursive agency. Dougald B. Maceachen, for example, argued in 1950 that Collins’s *Man and Wife* (1870) “speeded up” law reform (139). And the idea that law and literature are discursive practices in common originates in Plato. (See Koffler.)

⁶ Also see Gallagher.

⁷ Other examples can be readily given. In *Desire and Domestic Fiction* (1987), Nancy Armstrong states her position unequivocally: “I regard fiction, in other words, both as the document and as the agency of cultural history” (23). In *Dear Reader, The Conscripted Audience in Nineteenth-Century British Fiction* (1996), Garrett Stewart similarly concludes that “Literature does not simply reflect the social constructions of its period; it numbers itself among them” (6).

⁸ Much modern criticism is in accord. Andrew Blake, for example, argues that serialised novels “were, if less clearly argued as tracts, at least part of the same set of arguments, presenting the same issues, and were presenting them as happening not to abstract individuals, types or classes but to ‘real’ individuals” (133).

⁹ Unless otherwise stated, the following biographical details are summarised from Roderick.

¹⁰ See the preface to *Botany Bay* (1859) and S. J. Routh.

¹¹ See Keesing. (On Lang's Anglo-Indian romance, *The Wetherbys, Father and Son* (1853), and its relation to the broad context of Anglo-Indian fiction, see Lyall.)

¹² In his introduction to his 1992 edition of Lang's *Lucy Cooper* (1846), Crittenden also notes how Lang's novels can be seen as "works of comic satire" (iv).

¹³ See O'Kell, who similarly positions *Coningsby* as a romance, rather than as a novel able to engage with political discourse.

¹⁴ The question of how readers read was, of course, of major concern throughout the Victorian period. Perhaps the most typical view is assumed in Trollope's *Autobiography* (1883), which generally presents a novelist's readers as a kind of secular congregation.

¹⁵ Although George Moir's definitions of "novel" and "romance" in the 1842 *Encyclopaedia Britannica* are distinct, his phrase "the whole range of novel or romance" (41) suggests that the terms could overlap in the mid-nineteenth century. Moir's distinction is as follows: in a novel, "the events are accommodated to the ordinary train of human events, and the modern state of society"; in a romance, "the interest of the narrative turns chiefly on marvellous and uncommon interests" (40).

¹⁶ See "John Lang." *Notes and Queries* published six articles on Lang in 1869.

¹⁷ See also the 1853 volume of *Household Words*, which contains eleven Australian stories or features. Webby attributes this intense English interest in Australia to the 1850s gold rushes in New South Wales and Victoria ("Colonial Writers and Readers" 53). The title of William Howitt's novel, *Land, Labour and Gold* (1855) crisply sums up the subject matter of such writing.

¹⁸ There are many instances of Australian fiction's direct influence on English fiction. See Woodring.

¹⁹ See G. B. Barton's *Literature in New South Wales* and *Poets and Prose-Writers of New South Wales*. Published in Sydney in 1866, both books attempted to nurture an Australian literary history. (See Perkins, "Literary Culture 1851-1914.")

²⁰ Keesing suggests one Lavinia Winter as a possible original for Emily Orford (63-83), but the connection is tenuous (and unconnected with the idea of forgery).

²¹ There are other influences, too. As Roderick explains (119, 126), Lang's story "Frank Charles Howard" was published in 1842 as the first of the *Legends of Australia*. The tale concerns a lieutenant who murders his father-in-law and is transported to New South Wales. His wife follows him.

²² Savery's trial took place on 4 April 1825 at the Bristol Assize. See "Criminal Trials: Henry Savery, for Forgery" (*The Times* 6 Apr. 1825). Quintus's Sydney of 1805 replaces Savery's Hobart of 1825 (E. M. Miller 4).

²³ See Argyle 10-26, Scheckter 94-97. Emily's life is described in Hadgraft's introductions to his editions of *Quintus Servinton* and *The Hermit in Van Diemen's Land*.

²⁴ Hadgraft was the first to note this letter (*Hermit* 27).

²⁵ The Hobart and Sydney newspaper offices exchanged copies of their respective publications. With the news of Savery's death, Lang, who wrote for Sydney papers in 1842 (Keesing 43-45), might easily have picked up the gossip associated with Savery by word of mouth.

²⁶ Savery had been an editor of a newspaper in both Bristol and Hobart Town (Hadgraft, *Quintus* xi, xvii).

²⁷ Unless otherwise stated, all quotations are from the serialised version (*Emily Orford*). The numbers in brackets refer to the page numbers for volume eighty-three, July to Dec. 1853.

²⁸ Savery was a sugar-refiner.

²⁹ Keesing argues that Brade is modelled on Mr. Slade, the Superintendent of Sydney barracks (70), but Brade's role as Emily's seducer aligns him just as convincingly with Savery's Malvers and Algernon Montagu. Lang had, in fact, used the phrase "[t]rust not to Brade" in *Too Clever By Half* (1853) (114). Clearly, "Brade" was a name that Lang associated with mistrust, a sentiment that connects Brade to Malvers/Montagu as much as it does to the brutish and disgraced Mr. Slade.

³⁰ He lost it the following year, however (Ackland 338).

³¹ See "Forgery," *Hobart Town Courier and Van Diemen's Land Gazette*. That Harcourt/Roberts follows suit suggests that Lang did know of Savery's Australian forgeries.

³² The metaphor naturally springs to mind. More recently, John Scheckter has spoken of "the merciful forgery of a happy ending" in *Quintus Servinton* (97).

³³ On the Englishness of *Quintus* and its style, see Argyle 10-26.

³⁴ Flash could mean forged.

³⁵ See Connor.

³⁶ See Routh, and volume nineteen of *Household Words* (4 Dec. 1858 – 28 May 1859): "A Special Convict" (489-91), "Baron Wald" (537-41), "Kate Crawford" (596-600), and "Miss Saint Felix" (613-17).

³⁷ Roderick concludes: “[t]o readers of a hundred years ago [i.e. c1863] [*The Forger’s Wife*] was a true and vivid picture of the bizarre society of Sydney in the 1820s. It is still readable and is remarkable for the rapidity of its narrative, the vigour of its language, and the conciseness of its style” (126).

³⁸ Hazel King has even remarked how the episodes involving Flower are “genuine” (180).

³⁹ Indeed, “Extracts from the Journal of a Visit to New South Wales in 1853” - was placed, in two parts, near *The Forger’s Wife* (as *Emily Orford*) in the Nov.-Dec. issues of *Fraser’s*. In many respects, one is a continuation of the other.

⁴⁰ The story is listed in the bibliography under its later title of “Fauntleroy.”

⁴¹ See Altick, *Presence* 525-26. For a rather different reason, the Smyth estate again became the focus of a sensation in 1855, when the Smyth family vault was ransacked. The graverobbers were searching not only for the jewels that were reputed to have been interred with Lady Smyth, but also for the silver box in which lay her heart (“Shocking Sacrilege in the Smyth Vault”).

⁴² There were, of course, many other likely inspirations. On 6 July 1850, for example, W. H. Wills published an article in *Household Words* on the lamentable state of old parish registers (“Chips: Destruction of Parish Registers”). Further articles appeared in *Household Words* on the deplorable and hazardous conditions in which old wills were kept in cathedrals (Wills, Wills and Dickens, “The Doom of English Wills”). The second of the articles refers to how these old documents were particularly susceptible to fire (Wills and Dickens, “The Doom of English Wills: Cathedral Number Two” 27). In material such as this, perhaps, lay the seeds of the Old Welmingham register and the fire in the dilapidated vestry.

⁴³ See Lonoff, Nayder 1-128, Ackroyd 593-94, 636-38, 794, 844, 869, 886-87.

⁴⁴ D. M. Evans was editor of the *Banker’s Magazine*.

⁴⁵ MacDonagh and Smith also note that, “Percival is a writer” (275).

⁴⁶ See Philip Gaskell 214-30.

⁴⁷ For an historical account of how patriarchal discourse was related to the discourse of insanity, see Scull.

⁴⁸ With the passing of the Married Women’s Property Act of 1870, for example, women were ultimately guaranteed greater financial independence than before.

⁴⁹ On Collins and nineteenth-century psychology, see Jenny Bourne Taylor.

⁵⁰ See A. Wills, who also argues, by a rather different route, that Collins was trying to “undermin[e] [...] the juridical process” (92).

⁵¹ See Welsh and Schramm, both of whom address essentially this topic in their respective studies of the law’s relation to Victorian fiction.

⁵² Schramm makes a similar point more generally: “[the] defects of the law are identified by [Victorian] authors with enthusiasm; the legal profession’s semiotic weaknesses legitimise authors’ own representations of the ‘real’” (*Testimony and Advocacy* 15).

⁵³ See, for example, Weiss, *Hell of the English* 136-75.

⁵⁴ Mythology, of various kinds, permeated the lives of most literate Victorians and was a potent conceptualising force. (See P. Ellis, “Eliza Keary.”)

⁵⁵ Unless otherwise stated, the following two paragraphs are summarised from the *DLB*, Robb 61-62, Russell 135-37, Deeson 147-55.

⁵⁶ These included “the Grand Junction Railway of France, the East Kent line, the Rome and Frascati Railway, a Swiss railway, and a coal company” (*DLB*).

⁵⁷ See “John Sadleir: Speech at Carlow.”

⁵⁸ See “Resignation of John Sadleir” 9 and 11 Jan. 1854.

⁵⁹ See “Deaths: John Sadleir.”

⁶⁰ Sadleir’s brother James was complicit in this embezzlement (“John Sadleir: Letter to His Brother”).

⁶¹ See Evans, *Facts, Failures, and Frauds* 268-390.

⁶² Sadleir was, however, “an able chairman of the London and County Joint-Stock Banking Company from 1848 to within a few months of his death” (*DLB*). That he was not a total fraudster perhaps made his fraudulence all the harder to detect.

⁶³ The account in this paragraph is largely drawn from Robb 57-71.

⁶⁴ See Weiss, “Secret Pockets and Secret Breasts.”

⁶⁵ Although Thomas might well have had Marlowe’s *Doctor Faustus* in mind, the allusions are probably to Goethe’s *Faust*. Goethe was enormously popular with Victorian readers (Roberts 169, 172).

⁶⁶ An interesting qualification to this judgement, however, may be deduced from an article by Harvey Peter Sucksmith, who argues that Dickens’s ironic presentation of Merdle as a Christ-like figure is based on Holman Hunt’s “The Light of the World,” which was exhibited at the Royal Academy during

Spring 1854. But perhaps there was a complementary line of influence. The author of *The Times* article on Sadleir's suicide (5 Apr. 1856), I suggest, appears to have written up Sadleir's death with Holman Hunt's painting in mind. (Ruskin had, after all, written a lengthy letter on the painting in *The Times* 5 May 1854.) Dickens was a regular reader of *The Times* and would surely have picked up on the references to Christ in this article.

⁶⁷ Dickens went into more detail about Sadleir in a letter to Forster. See *Life* 2: 136.

⁶⁸ The reasons for his attacks were also personal. Fitzjames Stephen believed that his father, Sir James Stephen, had been the model for Lord Decimus Tite Barnacle (Eigner, "Dogmatism and Puppyism" 223).

⁶⁹ See also Dickens, Speech to the Reform Association, 27 June 1855.

⁷⁰ As Dahl details, double reviewing gave Fitzjames Stephen considerable literary critical influence.

⁷¹ In "A Triad of Novels" (Nov. 1850), *Fraser's*, for example, had censured *Alton Locke* for its presumption to enter political discourse.

⁷² Through its interest in dreams that recount a repressed reality (52, 95, 105, 185, 331, 527, 532, 591), its omnipresent obsession with secrets, its love of cryptic and condensed speech (264-65, 281, 400, 596), and its conception of characters as "allegorical personage[s]" (652), *Little Dorrit* presents itself as a psychic entity in which characters can articulate the text's anxieties.

⁷³ Janice M. Carlisle takes a related perspective in "*Little Dorrit*: Necessary Fictions." She argues that Dickens "develops a correlation between the fictions, the lies, that the characters tell each other or themselves and the novel he is writing" (196). Dickens, she concludes, "embodies within a particular novel an understanding of fiction in general that is comprehensive enough to include its moral ambiguities without allowing them to undercut its moral utility" (211). My argument is similar in its insistence that while *Little Dorrit* acknowledges its fraudulence, it believes in its ability to bring about socio-political change.

⁷⁴ See "Red Tape" (15 Feb. 1851) and "The Thousand and One Humbugs" (21 Apr. 1855, 28 Apr. 1855, 5 May 1855). On the Circumlocution Office and the facts of Civil Service reform, see Philpotts.

⁷⁵ Goldberg cites Carlyle's *Latter-Day Pamphlet III* as "the basis for Dickens' representation of the Circumlocution Office" (66). Dickens was indeed, as *Fraser's* assumed, trying to share the same political platform as Carlyle.

⁷⁶ The allusion is almost certainly to Redpath.

⁷⁷ The painting was shown in London at Leicester Fields in 1835 (Forster 1: 54-58). It was exhibited at the Bazar Boure-Nouvelle, when Dickens was sightseeing in Paris (Forster 2: 163-76). In 1855, when Dickens was staying among the artistic community in Paris (Forster 2: 174), E. J. Delécluze's influential *Louis David, son école et son temps* was published. Vaughan and Weston argue that Delécluze's book (which regarded *Marat* "as David's principal work") engaged critically with the Exposition Universelle of 1855 (20), which Dickens had attended. According to Forster, Dickens talked in Paris to artists and others about the Exposition. He sat for his portrait "with *Little Dorrit* on [his] mind" (2: 191). David's painting would certainly have appealed to the Dickensian imagination.

⁷⁸ Precedent had been set. Dickens uses a Cuyp-like image of cows for a scene in chapter XII (539). See also Dickens's number plans, Appendix B, 819. And, as previously noted, Harvey Peter Sucksmith argues that parts of Merdle's portrayal are indebted to Holman Hunt's "The Light of the World."

⁷⁹ The impact of the French Revolution on the mid-Victorian mind was considerable. *A Tale of Two Cities* (1859) was, of course, Dickens's most obvious and extensive manifestation of his interest in the subject. (See Von Rosador.)

⁸⁰ See R. Lund.

⁸¹ See Terry 236. Melmotte was, however, based on a number of models. (See Tracy, *Trollope's Later Novels* 159-61.)

⁸² See MacDonald 79-85.

⁸³ See Slakey, who offers a fairly detailed account of the "theme of word-without-substance" (252) in *The Way We Live Now*.

⁸⁴ On the regeneration of society after Melmotte's death, see Kincaid 169-74.

⁸⁵ Like his forgery, Melmotte's suicide has little financial or psychological basis. (See Harold James 255.) Once again, Melmotte's plot trajectory seems less a matter of realism than of proving a point about the dire consequences of forging fictions in society.

⁸⁶ In alluding to Melmotte's possible Jewishness, Trollope is less attacking Disraeli's Jewishness *per se*, than using it as a cheap way to attack Disraeli's political ethos and its pervasive influence on society. The topic has received much critical attention. See Hertz, Delany. On the complexity and ambiguity of Trollope's representations of Jews, see Sanders, *Anthony Trollope* 46-47. On Melmotte's other racial identities, see Sutherland, "Is Melmotte Jewish?"

⁸⁷ On Disraeli, Trollope and political novels, see Halperin 203-04, 207.

⁸⁸ Indeed, in *The Prime Minister* (1876), Trollope returns to the issue of the Jewish forger and political discourse through the figure of Ferdinand Lopez. (The forgery is discussed in detail in chapter LXIX.) Trollope evidently could not let go of this association.

⁸⁹ The relative extent of their satirical attacks on society is a moot point. See Wall, Polhemus 187-94.

⁹⁰ See "The Roupell Case," *The Times* 20 Aug. 1862.

⁹¹ My account of Harris is from *Who Was Who*. See *Hints on Advocacy* (1879), which in the year of Harris's death had run to its thirteenth edition. His other notable legal work was *Illustrations in Advocacy*, which contains an analysis of the speech of the counsel for the prosecution in the Tichborne Case, Henry Hawkins QC (later Lord Brampton). He also published some fiction and poetry of little merit.

⁹² See *Roupell and Another v Haws and Others* 3 Foster and Finlason 784, 176 ER 359.

⁹³ His youth and inexperience became an issue. He rarely spoke in parliament and came across, to *The Times* at least, as "a dummy" ("Mr. Roupell and His Constituents").

⁹⁴ See "Roupell: Address to His Constituents."

⁹⁵ See "Roupell: Address to His Constituents at Kennington."

⁹⁶ Roupell's own doubts about electoral reform are clear from his language. In one speech at the Horns tavern, Roupell conjoined the issue of national defence with electoral reform:

The army of England ought to be the people of England in arms. (Cheers.) But surely those who were trusted with firelocks might equally be trusted with votes. (Cheers.) The people had a right to a large extension of the suffrage, and such an extension he should demand in the House of Commons. (Cheers.) ("Roupell: Address to His Constituents at Kennington.")

The association of the people, votes and firearms, however, creates an unsettling image. Votes, the connection implies, are as dangerous as firearms; and the people are many.

⁹⁷ See Hoppen, *The Mid-Victorian Generation* 237-53.

⁹⁸ See Hoppen, "Roads to Democracy."

⁹⁹ In *Phineas Redux* (1874), moreover, Mr. Browborough is tried for electoral bribery (2: 31-45).

¹⁰⁰ My account of the Roupell trials and their aftermath are based on the following *Times* reports:

"Roupell Case," 20, 21, 22 Aug. 1862; "Roupell In Horsemonger Lane Gaol," 8 Sept. 1862; "Criminal Trials: Roupell, for Forgery," 25 Sept. 1862; "Case of Roupell, the Forger," 26 Sept. 1862; "Roupell Case: Actions Arising," 13 July 1863; "Civil Actions: Roupell," 18, 25 July 1863; "Roupell Forgeries,"

28 July 1863. I also draw on *The Great Forgeries of William Roupell, Late MP for Lambeth. Official Report of the Trial at Guildford, in the Case of Roupell v. Waite* (1862).

¹⁰¹ See “Roupell Case” (*The Times* 21 Aug. 1862), which briefly relates Roupell to Collins’s *No Name*. *The Times* suggests that illegitimacy inexorably leads to criminality, whether in life or in literature.

¹⁰² The following details are from John Collins Francis.

¹⁰³ The choice of the name Hawkins might be a playful allusion to Sir Henry Hawkins (1817-1907), who studied at the Middle Temple, was called to the bar in 1843, and became a QC in 1858. He was knighted in 1875. Harris edited his *Reminiscences* (1904).

¹⁰⁴ It is not insignificant that *Mayfair to Millbank* was published by Thomas Cautley Newby (a specialist in trashy fiction, though he did publish the first novels of Emily Brontë and Trollope), and not by Steven and Son (the august publishers of law books).

¹⁰⁵ Harris later gave the matter much thought. He stated his views on the differences between stories in law and in the novel in *Illustrations in Advocacy*:

As the object of telling a romantic story differs from that of narrating a series of facts in Court, so the art is different. The interests also are of an opposite nature. The object of the former is to entertain without any regard to your belief, while the latter is to impress your belief without any view to your entertainment, except that an artistic advocate will take care to rivet your attention by the entertaining manner in which he unfolds the incidents of his story; but he will not amuse you at the expense of his cause, or excite your imagination to the detriment of your judgment. The interest he excites is in *the reality of the facts* he intends to prove; the charm of the novelist depends mainly in presenting fiction, so that it *resembles* reality. The emotions are stirred by imaginary incidents, and at the emotions his art stops. The advocate, on the contrary, if he awakens emotion, does so only the more surely to reach your belief, and when he produces a striking situation it is but for the purpose of impressing its incidents. (144)

According to these definitions, it would be fair to say that *Mayfair to Millbank* is obviously a novel (“charm” is redolent of “spell” [1: 124]). Once Roupell’s story enters this form, it becomes merely a fiction that “resembles reality.” *Mr. Bumpkin’s Lawsuit*, on the other hand, is a novel that also tries to assume some of the qualities of legal advocacy.

¹⁰⁶ Even *The Way We Live Now* is preoccupied with the discursive forgeries committed by society, rather than by the novel.

5. Conclusion: The Tichborne Forger and the Tichborne Novels

Two kinds of real-life forger chiefly influenced Victorian fiction. First, the forger of documents relating to property transfer: Provis forged wills and a registration of marriage; Lady Ricketts, a will (perhaps); and Roupell, title deeds and a will. Second, the forger of financial documents or notes: Savery forged bills of exchange; Wainewright, powers of attorney; Bailey, a promissory note; and Powell, letters of credit and cheques. Sadleir, who forged both title deeds and share certificates, qualifies for both categories. All bar Lady Ricketts (who was, in law, innocent) were convicted of the felony of forgery. The most famous Victorian individual who committed forgery, however, was not convicted of the crime.

This forger was the Tichborne Claimant.¹ Roger Charles Doughty Tichborne, born into a wealthy Roman Catholic family and the heir to the Tichborne baronetcy and estates in Hampshire, was believed drowned in 1854. A butcher from Wagga Wagga, Australia, with a not entirely unpromising case, officially declared himself to be the missing heir in 1867. Although the Claimant could prove that Roger Tichborne's mother endorsed his claim, he lost his civil suit against the Tichborne family in February 1872. (This took the form of an action of ejectment against a Colonel Lushington, the tenant at Tichborne Park.) He was subsequently tried for perjury from 23 April 1873 to 28 February 1874, found guilty, and exposed as Thomas Castro, alias Arthur Orton (a butcher from Wapping). Attempts to prove him the rightful heir continued on his release, unsuccessfully. In recent times, the story of the Tichborne Claimant has been told in several monographs and even on screen.

By the early 1870s, the Tichborne Claimant story had completely gripped the public mind.² It was a riveting tale of adventure and intrigue, ranging across Paris,

Ireland, Chile, and Australia, and featuring the Roman Catholic aristocracy in England, a shipwreck, service in a dragoons regiment, life in the Australian bush, the return of a lost heir, and compelling courtroom drama. Whether the Claimant was Sir Roger Tichborne or not took on secondary importance. Above all, the case posed, in the wake of the 1867 Reform Act, uncomfortable socio-economic questions for the nation, and emphasised its class and religious divisions.³ Why was the Establishment so reluctant, it seemed, to accept that a man who had been a butcher could also have been a man born and raised a baronet? Was the Claimant simply a brazen working-class impostor who had duped a bereaved mother, and who would set a precedent for others of his kind? Indeed, was anyone's property safe from this sort of impudent imposition? Or was the Claimant being denied his rights as the legitimate heir on account of the snobbishness and self-interest of the Establishment? Was there, as some maintained, a conspiracy against him by a circle of upper-class-English Catholics? Supporters on both sides of these arguments were widespread and vociferous.

The Tichborne case had another distinguishing feature: it was closely connected to forgery. Instead of the maximum sentence of seven years' imprisonment for perjury, the Claimant was, very unusually, given two consecutive seven-year prison sentences: one for each committal of the offence.⁴ The Crown prosecution had let it be known that it originally wished to try him for the felony of forgery, rather than for the misdemeanour of perjury: for the forgery of Sir Roger Tichborne's signature on the Tichborne bonds. Designed to fund the Claimant's civil case, "the Tichborne Debenture Scheme" had invited speculators to pay a sum of considerably less than the £100 per bond they would receive within a month after the Claimant was proven to be the baronet (*Tichborne v. Lushington* 2: 1715-716). Such was the support

for the Claimant's project (for whatever reason), that the scheme raised £40,000 (Woodruff 165). The Claimant's defence counsel at the criminal trial, Dr. Kenealy,⁵ argued that in initially indicting the Claimant for forgery, the Crown intended "to prejudice the public mind [...] with the notion that [the Claimant] was a forger as well as a perjurer" (*The Queen v. Orton* 4: 84). The Crown, Kenealy reasoned, must have known before it brought the indictment that a forgery trial would mean isolating a jury for "five or six months" (ibid.), the grounds on which the Crown said it dropped the indictment. It is also likely that the Crown wanted to associate the Claimant with forgery in order to deter others from similarly chancing their luck. (The last thing the Crown wanted was to see the courts filled with speculative actions of ejectment funded by a gambling public.) The Crown proceeded with a perjury trial, however, because a conviction was easier to secure.

Nevertheless, forgery loomed large in the Tichborne trials. Both the defence and prosecution were forced to confess that some pieces of the masses of written evidence that they had submitted were, in fact, forgeries.⁶ Bizarrely, the Claimant admitted that letters he had denounced as the prosecution's forgeries were, actually, his own forgeries (*Tichborne v. Lushington* 2: 1347-359). And in his *History of the Criminal Law* (1883), Fitzjames Stephen located the case within his discussion of forgery:

[At the time of the Tichborne trial there was] no general provision against personation as a means of acquiring property [...] nor was it recognised as an offence at common law till after the trial of the notorious Orton for perjury in asserting that he was Sir Roger Tichborne. The crime, however, was made a felony punishable by penal servitude for life as a maximum by 37 & 38 Vic. C. 36, passed in 1874. (186)

For the law, the Tichborne Claimant trials expanded the parameters of forgery. In 1874, the law's concept of personation as being rather like perjury shifted. The new

maximum sentence reflected how personation was now to be treated as forgery made flesh. In terms of the Crown's original indictment, several details of the case, the Claimant's sentencing, and Fitzjames Stephen's treatment of personation as a subsection of forgery, the Tichborne trials were a forgery case in almost all but name.

5.1 How the Tichborne Trials Amplified Forgery for Victorian Fiction

What were the dominant motifs of the Tichborne case, and how exactly did they relate to forgery? The Draft Penal Code defined forgery as “the making of a false document, knowing it to be false, with the intention that it shall in any way be used or acted upon as genuine” (qtd. in Fitzjames Stephen, *History* 187). In signing as Sir Roger Tichborne on the debenture bonds, Orton unwittingly gave a perfect example of the crime. Although the Claimant was not tried for forgery, the trials separated, in considerable detail, many of the concepts that underpinned the law's basic idea of forgery.

The trials demonstrated how the very nature of handwriting – the forger's medium – made any official separation of the “genuine” from the “false” tremendously difficult. If the Claimant wished to succeed in his suit, he had to present a sufficiently accurate copy of the handwriting of the pre-1854 Roger Tichborne. Copying – in banks and businesses – was integral to the socio-economic structure of Victorian society. The goal of the copyist, as a quick glance at a contemporary copybook makes clear, was flawless reproduction.⁷ Lawyers at both trials, though not

the Claimant himself, built their cases on this ideal, minimising or maximizing the significance of the imperfections in the Claimant's handwriting with as much ingenuity as they could muster.⁸ Despite M. Charles Chabot's professional expertise in handwriting analysis, his findings on the precise relationship between the signatures of the Claimant, Arthur Orton, Thomas Castro and the undisputed Roger Tichborne were hardly conclusive (*The Queen v. Orton* 3: 2334-408). Perhaps this was to be expected. How could Victorian courts distinguish, with any certainty, a forgery of a Tichborne signature from a genuine Tichborne signature that was, perhaps inevitably, different from a signature made at an earlier date?⁹ The case dramatically illustrated how no two signatures, even if made by the same person, are exactly alike; how all signatures on credit notes are therefore intrinsically doubtful, even genuine ones; and how this is the doubt that forgers exploit.

The trials also emphasised how unreliable the authenticating authorities could be themselves. In the civil trial, the Claimant's lawyer, Ballantine, complained, "these transcripts are thoroughly inaccurate" (*Tichborne v. Lushington* 2: 1415). One of the copying clerks, Henry Harwin Tolcher, was subsequently cross-examined on the "errata" in his Chancery transcript (*The Queen v. Orton* 1: 65). And at least one of the official published transcripts of the criminal trial for mid-October 1873 is covered, in faded contemporary copperplate script, with an estimated five emendations per page (*The Queen v. Orton* 7: 2225-336, British Library copy 1891.e.9.). These errors in the printed document were made either by shorthand copyists or printers. The need for their handwritten correction or supplementation destroys all faith in the accuracy of the published historical records of the trial. Under clerks' pens, the dimensions of the printed transcript's subject matter shifts kaleidoscopically, like the Claimant's supposed recollections of his life as Roger Tichborne. Distances are condensed,

people's names change, times are dramatically reduced, and a city is exchanged for one in another country. The quasi-official copperplate is an ironic meta-narrative: while undermining the transcript, it simultaneously declares itself as a script also produced under the auspices of the very transcript machinery whose mimetic inadequacies it exposes. As transcription is, ideally, the immediate and accurate recording of what is said at a trial, what chance did the Claimant's memory have, if indeed it was his, of giving a convincing account? The law's official memory – the transcript - was no better.¹⁰

In its quest for certainty, the law tried to fix the identity of Roger Tichborne. Summing up, Lord Chief-Justice Cockburn observed that Roger Tichborne's correspondence allowed the court "to know exactly who and what the man was" (*The Queen v. Orton* 9: 3771). Idiosyncrasies of spelling, grammar, diction, phrasing and tone characterised a man's mind and history.¹¹ In painstaking analyses of letters written by Roger Tichborne, the trials excavated the textual artefacts of Roger Tichborne's identity. Could, as the Claimant's supporters wished to believe, the undisputed script of a wealthy young baronet and gentleman also be that of a rough working man from Wagga Wagga? Did the Claimant's signature and barely literate letters bear the textual traces of a dormant aristocratic identity? In the Tichborne trials, identity was reified in ink. Yet the Claimant's comments destabilised these certainties at every turn. The trials thus highlighted how the forgery of wills, parish registers and the like was essentially encouraged by the possibility that human identity was remarkably fluid. Impostor-forgers exploited people's readiness to acknowledge this possibility.

The trials firmly located all these issues within the corporeality of the Claimant. His body – celebrated for its bulk - was treated by the court as a text of

“scars and marks” to be questioned and interpreted (*The Queen v. Orton* 3: 2289). His ear lobes, lip, eyebrow, finger, leg, thumb, nose, arm, wrist and ankles were treated as though they were writing surfaces. If the Claimant were the true Sir Roger, the marks of important events in Roger Tichborne’s life, prior to the report of his drowning, would be inscribed on his flesh. Cicatrices, the body’s non-congenital marks, were decoded by medical experts as the possible records of a venesection, a vaccination, ulceration, or the impact of a ship’s fishhook. The law tried to determine whether it had before it the genuine encrypted skin of Roger Tichborne or a forgery. In chiefly trying to sift “the false” from the “genuine,” then, the Tichborne trials vividly pushed forgery into the overlapping areas of handwriting, authentication, identity, and the body. They amplified the human, personal, and physical aspects of forgery.

Tichborne novels

The Tichborne case dominated Victorian fiction in the 1870s like no other real-life trial. Given the public’s obsession with Tichborniana, where better for a novelist to put a forgery plot than within a story about a disputed heir? In *Mr. Vaughan’s Heir* (1874), by Frank Lee Benedict, Mr. Vaughan intends his nephew, Launcelot Cromlin, to be the heir to his fortune. In an attempt to displace Launcelot in the affections of his uncle and thus usurp him as the heir, Darrell Vaughan (an opium fiend) gets hold of a cheque that Mr. Vaughan has made to Launcelot for fifteen hundred dollars. To make Mr. Vaughan suspect that Launcelot is a forger and swindler, Darrell Vaughan alters the value of the cheque to fifteen thousand dollars, and forges Launcelot’s signature as the bearer. Though the bank’s agents are initially blamed, suspicion is not removed from Launcelot during Mr. Vaughan’s lifetime. The association of a forgery and a disputed heir certainly chimes with the Tichborne case. But the note is discordant.

Rather, the cheque forgery evokes the real-life financial frauds explored in *The Way We Live Now*. *Mr. Vaughan's Heir* is not decidedly a Tichborne novel.

The Tichborne novel was fundamentally unlike the novel inspired by Sadleir and the other City forgers, or by Savery, Wainewright, Roupell, or even by Provis. For the novel as for the law, the Tichborne case filtered felonious forgery into personation. There was nothing exceptional in this process, of course, as the forgeries connected with the cases of Alexander Alexander, the Tracy Peerage, and Thomas Provis show. Indeed, to Victorian commentators, the Tichborne trials seemed to be a repetition of the Provis trials, only greatly magnified in scale and attracting far greater and wider public interest. There was even a continuity of legal personnel. (The Lord Chief Justice of the Court of Common Pleas at the time of the Tichborne civil suit was William Bovill, who had represented “Sir Richard Hugh Smyth” at the trial of *Smyth v. Smyth* in 1853.) But the *personation* aspect of the Provis case had little resonance in either the *Woman in White* or *Great Expectations*. Glyde’s imposture is a technicality (he is illegitimate); Magwitch’s alias is transparent and his disguise (in London) is designed to conceal rather than deceive. It is true that Dutton personates Wylder in *Wylder's Hand*, but Dutton is not a forger himself, and the incident is a very minor adjunct to the forgery plot. The Provis forgery trial had kept Victorian fiction interested in felonious forgery rather than personation. The Tichborne case, by contrast, featured a real-life forger who was indicted for forgery (but not tried for it in a court of law), and who was portrayed – in many of the particulars of both the action of ejection and the perjury trial - as a kind of forgery himself.

5.2 The Wandering Heir, Is He Popenjoy?, and Within the Maze: New Directions for Real-life Forgery

In extensively defining forgery through personation, the Tichborne Claimant case precipitated alternative responses to forgery in Victorian fiction. Two of the novels I consider in this chapter, Charles Reade's *The Wandering Heir* (1872) and Trollope's *Is He Popenjoy?* (1878), do not directly refer to forgery at all; yet this absence demonstrates an important aspect of what happened to real-life forgery in Victorian fiction in the 1870s. Many Tichborne novels, however, did contain forgery plots. After very briefly offering a sample of these, I consider one such novel, Ellen Wood's *Within the Maze* (1872), in more detail. Real-life forgery's function in Victorian fiction fundamentally changed, I argue in this chapter, owing to the huge influence of the Tichborne case on 1870s literary culture.¹²

Reade's historical realism

One of the more contentious responses to the Tichborne case was *The Wandering Heir: A Matter-of-Fact Romance*, by Charles Reade (1814-84). An Oxford don who had had both legal and medical training, Reade was an expert in violins, an occasional journalist, and a successful playwright. At the time of the Tichborne case, Reade was also one of the most celebrated of English novelists. His stock-in-trade was documentary realism, assembled from notebooks filled with factual details,¹³ and frequently put in the service of social reform. Fitzjames Stephen had criticised *It is Never too Late to Mend* (1856) – a novel advocating prison reform – alongside *Little Dorrit* and on similar grounds. Not that Reade was in any way cowed; in *Hard Cash* (1863), he attacked private lunatic asylums. Reade invariably sought to weave current affairs into his fiction.

On 18 March 1872, he wrote the first of at least six letters about the Tichborne Claimant for publication in the press. Reade discusses the Claimant's body, memory, identity and handwriting. All the circumstantial evidence, he argues, points to the fact that the Claimant was unquestionably Arthur Orton.¹⁴ In one of these public letters, Reade connected the Tichborne case to the case of James Annesley (1715-60), the probable heir to the earldom of Anglesey.¹⁵ This Claimant story began in Dublin. Annesley's wicked uncle, Richard, forcibly placed the boy James on board a ship bound for America. While his uncle became the Earl of Anglesey, James was sold as a slave in Delaware. Freed, he became a sailor, and from Jamaica, he wrote a letter to the *Daily Post* declaring his claimed identity as the legitimate Earl of Anglesey. Upon arrival in England in 1741, he tried to secure the help of the Duchess of Buckingham (his step-grandmother) in the pursuit of his claim. But in 1742 he killed a man in a shooting accident, and was tried for murder. He was acquitted and persisted in his claim, but he was unable to fund its successful conclusion. *The Wandering Heir* is a fictionalised copy of the Annesley case. Reade adds some love interest – the cross-dressing Philippa – but otherwise sticks rigidly to his sources.¹⁶ Victorian readers would have read Reade's Annesley novel against the Tichborne case.¹⁷

Although there is no forgery in either the Annesley case or *The Wandering Heir*, the novel poses within its plot the question of how one can distinguish the genuine from the false. While in Ireland, James Annesley "witnessed two abductions, one real, one sham [...] The imitation was the lineal descendant of the real [...] [Annesley] never knew for certain which was the pseudo-Sabine, which the real, – and never will" (18). More important to Reade than the doomed quest to identify the genuine, however, is the idea of an "imitation" as a "lineal descendant of the real." He

proposes an “imitation” that is theoretically distinct from the genuine, difficult to distinguish in practice, and which is its legitimate successor.

In these reflections on abductions in eighteenth-century Ireland, *The Wandering Heir* traces how Reade saw his novel’s own relation to the historical past in which its action takes place. Reade explained his literary technique fully soon after *The Wandering Heir* was first published. He did so, like Bulwer-Lytton and Emma Robinson before him, in the form of a defence. Mr. and Mrs. Mortimer Collins, using pseudonyms, put *The Wandering Heir* on trial in one letter to the *Athenaeum* and one to the *Press and St James’s Chronicle*.¹⁸ The charge was that the novel’s passages on Dublin society ladies had been plagiarised from Swift’s “Journal of a Modern Lady.” Had *The Wandering Heir* indeed stolen another’s writing? In *Trade Malice*, later reprinted as an appendix to *The Wandering Heir*,¹⁹ Reade claimed that the Collinses, hiding behind pseudonyms, had misrepresented his literary practice out of envy.²⁰ He argued that his use of Swift was “jewel-setting” (220), and related it to his general scholarly approach:

[E]ither I must do as the sham novelists do, drift into reckless blundering, and present for the eighteenth century the nineteenth century daubed with “Forgad!” and “Pshaw!” or I must take the scholar’s way [...] I ransacked Dublin for old records [...] (222)²¹

His idiosyncratic “union of fact and imagination” (233), he continued, was “a kind of intellectual copulation” (ibid.). Reade presented *The Wandering Heir* as the rightful literary heir to the eighteenth-century Irish “real.” Reade’s lexis - his language of the real, of imitation, of writing, of identity, and of biological legitimacy, shows how the Tichborne case could readily raise for Victorian fiction issues of realism that had once – perhaps most notably in Gaskell’s *Ruth* – been explored through forgery.

More Trollopian sensationalism

One of Trollope's later novels similarly ejects forgery from literary territory that it had formerly occupied. Whereas Trollope had used forgery to test the literary possibilities of sensationalism in *Orley Farm*, he used the motif of the impostor to continue this investigation in *Is He Popenjoy?* (1878). The plot turns on an attempt to expose the expatriate Marquis's Italian-born infant son as the "false" (2: 283) heir to the marquisate of Brotherton. A letter signed by the Marquis's brother, Lord George, states the case. This letter "really amounted to no more than copying the Dean's words" (1: 250-51). The Dean schemes to disinherit "the present pseudo-Popenjoy" (2: 87) so that his daughter, now Lady George, may bear "a real Popenjoy" (2: 283). The Tichborne story is much in evidence here, clearly.²²

The subject of the Dean's machinations,²³ Popenjoy, is chiefly characterised by the signifiers of the sensation novel: mysterious foreign origins, a familial connection with alleged lunacy, and doubts as to his identity.²⁴ Popenjoy embodies sensationalism's central concern with "some evil mystery" (1: 217). Popenjoy is, his opponents opine, "a fictitious heir" (1: 226) and "a nasty little black thing" (1: 233). Such remarks evoke images of writing. Popenjoy is "a terrible blot" (1: 128), the degenerated creativity of spilled ink, perhaps. His very name of Popenjoy – the Brotherton heir's title – with its loose encoding of "popular," "pen," and "enjoy," is almost a pseudonym for the popular novel. *Is He Popenjoy?* puts sensationalism on trial as the disputed literary heir – a possible textual impostor – to the Trollope novel's traditional role as trustee of "English country life" (2: 205).²⁵ At one level, it is a belated response to *The Woman in White*'s sensationalising – in the Glydes of Blackwater Park – of Trollope's literary home-ground: "county society" (1: 224).

Like *Orley Farm*, *Is He Popenjoy?* makes qualified practical use of sensationalist elements. But Trollope's misgivings about sensationalism are expressed not only in the imagery surrounding Popenjoy (and his name), but also in the narrator's comments and the novel's plot. The narrator immediately associates sensationalism's *in medias res* narrative structure with "defraud[ing]" the "real novel readers" (those who like reading realist novels): "boiled mutton" (elementary details about characters' lives) must precede, for example, the relative narrative exoticism of "macaroni cheese" (1: 1-2). Initially, both the typically English Lord George – a mutton eater – and the Italianate Marquis are potential producers of Lord Popenjoy. By the end of the novel, the frugal and dour Lord George has overcome his initial impotence to produce a robust and emphatically English heir. Sensationalism is the Italianate "macaroni," or stylistic impostor, rightfully displaced by plain English "mutton." The death of Popenjoy symbolically seals Trollope's rejection of sensationalism's claim to be the established bearer of "county society" values.

In marked contrast to *Orley Farm*, this equivocal employment of sensationalism was achieved without any overt reference to forgery. Only its after-image remained. In addition to the allusion to Glyde's illegitimacy, there is perhaps also one to *Little Dorrit*. The Marquis's remark, "'I think I should have had myself bled to death in a warm bath'" (2: 195), recalls the death of Dickens's forger, Merdle. In a strikingly similar image, Merdle's body is discovered in a "warm [...] bath [...] veined with a dreadful red" (*Little Dorrit* 676). Is the Marquis indeed a Merdle-like forger (in the sense that he is the creator of a spurious heir)? Furthermore, Jack de Baron's reference to suicide by "prussic acid" (1: 145) alludes to the death of *The Way We Live Now*'s forger, Melmotte, who was partially modelled on Dickens's

Merdle, who, in turn, was shaped by John Sadleir, who committed suicide with prussic acid in 1856.

Despite these faint echoes of Sadleir, the fact remains that in key areas of Victorian fiction, real-life forgery was evidently becoming far less important as a self-reflexive device for exploring issues of realism, sensationalism, or discursive agency. Like *The Wandering Heir*, *Is He Popenjoy?* had taken its inspiration from the Tichborne case. It had cultivated fundamentally the same ground that another real-life forgery case – that of Lady Ricketts – had mapped out for *Orley Farm*: but without a fictional forger. Reade and Trollope were still major novelists. *The Wandering Heir* reputedly had “a circulation of upwards of half a million” (DLB), and, in Sutherland’s judgement, *Is He Popenjoy?* “evidently did fairly well for *All the Year Round*” (Introduction, *Is He Popenjoy?* xxiv).

Ellen Wood and the disassociation of forgery from writing

A host of minor Tichborne novels did feature forgery, however. In *Victor and Vanquished* (1874), by Mary Cecil Hay (1840-84), there is a baronet who is an impostor (Sir Neil Athelstone), forgery (by the rightful heir), a drowning, disguise, and even a reference to Valparaiso (where Roger Tichborne stayed in Chile). In Elise Thorp’s *Come of Her Vow* (1874), we have a baronet (Sir Crysto) who is killed in an accident, and a man in disguise - Eustace Vale as Mr. Valinto - who is also a forger. In *Who is He?* (1879), by the Marquis of ****, the plot also places forgery alongside issues of identity. These are novels of very little literary merit, and all were reviewed unsympathetically by the *Athenaeum*. Nevertheless, these Tichborne novels suggest the extent to which the Tichborne case encouraged Victorian fiction to subsume forgery within plots of disguise and imposture.

Ellen Wood's *Within the Maze* offers a far more worthy example of this type of Tichborne novel. In *Memorials of Mrs. Henry Wood* (1894), Charles W. Wood, her son, quoted the opinion of "one of the ablest critics of the day" (281), Dr. Japp: "Mrs. Henry Wood combined in a remarkable degree [...] realistic portraitures of men and women, with invention, construction and surprises. She successfully used sensational elements for moral ends [...]" (283). To this judgement, Adeline Sergeant added in 1897, "Mrs. Wood's stories, although sensational in plot, are purely domestic" (187). Ellen Wood (1814-87) began her literary career with contributions to *Bentley's Miscellany* and the *New Monthly Magazine*. Her first novel, *Danesbury House* (1860), won a prize from the Scottish Temperance League. *East Lynne* (1861), first published in serialised form, established her reputation as an extremely popular Victorian novelist.²⁶ Ellen Wood's other notable novels include *Mrs. Halliburton's Troubles* (1862), *The Channings* (1862), and *The Shadow of Ashlydyat* (1863).²⁷ References to forgery are fairly common in Ellen Wood's work, and those in *Within the Maze* follow earlier ones in *Elster's Folly* (1866), *Oswald Cray* (1864) and *Danesbury House*.

Although *Within the Maze* reverberates with Tichborne motifs, it is not enslaved to them. The plot features two brothers, Karl and Adam Andinnian. Adam inherits the Foxwood estate and marries the beautiful Rose, but the marriage is kept secret and a young medical student pursues his love suit. Furious, Adam shoots him dead. Adam is tried and sentenced to penal servitude in Portland Island prison. Thanks in part to his mother's intrigues, he escapes and is reported to have drowned in the attempt. Karl, a poor army officer, subsequently inherits the wealth and estate of his brother; he is then able to marry his love, Lucy Cleeve. But as the new baronet of Foxwood, he is technically an impostor: "his succession to the title and estates was

a fictitious one” (173). Adam, meanwhile, comes to live, clandestinely, in the Maze, a house surrounded by a labyrinthine maze on the Foxwood estate. Entry into this maze is barred to all those who do not have a key, and its secret passages and “clue” (252) are known only to its intimates. Adam’s life is confined and the danger of his discovery is ever-present.

Adam’s minder is the mysterious Mr. Smith, who, Karl fears, controls Adam’s movements. From a copy-book dropped by Smith, Karl suspects that Mr. Smith is not the man he is supposed to be: the land agent, that is, of Rose’s long-absent husband, Mr. Gray (i.e. Adam Andinnian). Karl suspects that Smith is actually an escaped forger in disguise, the notorious Philip Salter, who escaped from police custody by jumping from a train as it sped through a tunnel. Believing that Adam would be safer away from the Maze, Karl becomes convinced that Smith/Salter will not permit Adam’s escape from England because he himself is hiding out from the law. Karl goes to London to make inquiries into Smith’s identity. Soon, the detective police are hot on the trail to the Maze. At the same time, on the strength of Karl’s secretive visits to his brother in the Maze, and encouraged by one Miss Theresa Blake, Lucy believes that Karl is having an affair with Rose, who also lives at the Maze. It turns out that both connections are false: Karl is, of course, a loyal husband; Smith is Salter’s cousin. The forger had escaped to Canada and died there. For much of the novel, the reader remains ““in the imaginary pursuit of Salter”” (333). The celebrated forger is “a myth” (407).

So why does Wood create a forger who has a purely fictitious presence within the narrative? Speaking of his mother’s novel-writing practice, Charles W. Wood emphasised that during her characteristic three-week planning period, “Characters, motives, incident and action – everything was duly and deeply weighed, until all

threads were well in hand [...] every incident was carefully thought out and recorded [...]” (217-18). If we are to believe Charles’s account,²⁸ the idea of introducing a forger who is not a forger was the author’s careful decision. To a number of readers, the detail that Philip Salter had “fabricate[d] false bonds” (209) – situated within a story about a baronet believed to be drowned – would probably evoke the enormously popular Tichborne debenture scheme. Was the Philip Salter episode merely another red herring, a Tichborne motif that Ellen Wood had translated into a sensationalist false connection?

Whatever the authorial intention, the nature of Salter’s forgery is suggestive. A bond is not only a certificate proving an agreed financial investment, but also a distinct relationship between people. In this novel these are many “false bonds” between characters. *Within the Maze*’s chief “false bond” is its identification of Smith with the forger, Salter, and its falseness is only revealed unequivocally to the reader on page three hundred and twenty-seven.²⁹ Once Mr. Strange, the police detective, realises that Smith is not Salter, he then pursues the shadowy figure in the maze (whom we know is really Adam Andinnian), in the belief that *he* is the fugitive forger. Eager to prove that Karl is having an affair with Rose, Theresa Blake tells Mr. Strange that the man whom he saw in the house in the Maze is Karl: the forger imagined by Mr. Strange (i.e. Salter) turns out to be the baronet who is, the reader knows, a fake baronet (i.e. Karl). And yet the man whom the detective actually sees is Adam and not Karl.³⁰

In terms of its self-reflexivity, *Within the Maze* is similar to *Wylder’s Hand*. Both these texts celebrate their skilfully designed narrative structures. In *Wylder’s Hand*, a highly plotted novel that is also fascinated with physical identity, it is the forger’s *writing* that generates the reader’s excitement. In *Within the Maze*, however,

it is the question of the forger's bodily existence that is the dynamo for the reader's thrills. This – and not a forged text - generates the false relations – or “bonds” - between characters. Like *The Wandering Heir* and *Is He Popenjoy?*, *Within the Maze* registers how the Tichborne case encouraged Victorian fiction to see forgery in terms of the *body*. After Tichborne, forgery generally elides into imposture, disguise and pretence. Although Victorian novels continued to depict forgery as a crime of writing,³¹ the Tichborne case strongly led Victorian fiction's representations of forgery away from matters of writing. By the mid-1870s, forgery had ceased to be of crucial importance for Victorian fiction's form.

5.3 Conclusion

So ends the story of the historical moment in which real-life forgery significantly developed the Victorian novel. It is essentially a story in three parts. Some novels utilised real-life forgers to explore, articulate, and confront their preoccupation with an aspect of realism; some, to engage gainfully with sensationalism; and others, to investigate the question of fiction's discursive agency. Through analyses and evaluations of a comprehensive range of fictional representations of forgery, this thesis has shown where, when, how, and why, Victorian fiction used real-life forgery. Specific cultural, authorial or generic circumstances governed each representation. A chronological assessment of these representations, moreover, shows that Victorian fiction's encounters with felonious forgery were moving towards the same destination. Forgery – both real-life and fictional - developed the Victorian novel's

sense of its own value in the years 1846-79, whether in terms of its representations, aesthetics, ethics, or epistemology.

The literary critical company in which the thesis is to be located is broad. Groom, who also discusses real-life forgers and literary form, is perhaps my closest counterpart. But my forgers are felons, my literature is the novel, and my period is the Victorian. My investigation of the relations between fiction and legal discourse connects me to the work of Schramm, Craig, Dolin and Aristodemou. But, like Victorian fiction itself, I am more sceptical – specifically in chapter four - than they about the nature of fiction's discursive agency. My emphasis is on fiction's sense of itself *as* fiction. My conception of the novel – as primarily a dynamic and introspective textual medium - stems from the theoretical positions of Brooks and Welsh.

Chapters two and three reach out to various studies of literary form. My account of forgers and realisms rubs shoulders with those of Levine, Shuttleworth, Eigner and Lloyd. And, like Hughes, Pykett, Wynne and D. A. Miller, I see sensationalism as a literary process with which writers, novels and readers urgently had to engage and negotiate. Where I chiefly differ, is not only in my focus on forgery, but also in the way that I regard fictional forgery as a self-reflexive phenomenon *and* one with indissoluble ties to real-life forgery. Along with Juliet John, I believe that a text's self-reflexivity is inseparable from its historical context.³² My charting of a literary motif has much in common with Fahnestock's essay on bigamy, but in my study of forgery I have tried to take a more extensive and sophisticated approach. My chief inspiration, however, has been Sutherland's respect for the role that real-life incidents play in satisfying the narrative needs of a wide variety of Victorian novels.

The most important limit of the thesis is also the most obvious. In the period 1846-79, there were thousands of real-life forgery trials, and hundreds of novels featured forgery. A synchronic approach would have been more thorough. But to track down all the literary and non-literary representations of forgery throughout a single year (or so) would be a less fruitful enterprise. My study of *causes célèbres* and their literary echoes does, I feel, capture far better the spirit of Victorian fiction's encounters with real-life forgery. Victorian fiction evidently found some forgery cases more interesting than others: those of Savery, Wainewright, Bailey, Powell, Provis, Sadleir, Lady Ricketts, Roupell, and the Tichborne Claimant. Consequently, the study of individual authors became less important for me than the general patterns of how and why novels represented forgery. Real-life forgery excited all ranks of Victorian fiction: novels by canonical authors (Dickens, Collins, Trollope, Gaskell, Thackeray and Le Fanu), by lesser ones (G. P. R. James, Ellen Wood and John Lang), and by those who are probably best confined to literary oblivion (such as Richard Harris).

My work could be developed in a number of ways. My chapters on realism, sensationalism and discourses could each form the basis of a separate study. Another possible direction would be to examine the progress of forgery within the works of a single author, or perhaps a pair of authors. Dickens and Trollope are the most likely contenders for such treatment. Both used, quite consciously, a number of real-life forgers for a variety of purposes at different times. Alternatively, one could build up a detailed historical picture of the personal interactions linking forgers and novelists. (For example, Dickens had actually seen Wainewright, who, in turn, appeared before Sir Peter Laurie [Groom 267-68], who was also involved in Lady Ricketts's hearing, the case behind Trollope's *Lady Mason*.) Or one could assess, in more detail, the literary representation of a single forger: John Sadleir in *Little Dorrit*, *The Story of a*

Stolen Heir, *Davenport Dunn*, *Three Times Dead; Or, The Secret of the Heath*,³³ and *The Way We Live Now*, for example.³⁴ The thesis also profiles a small number of texts that would, in my opinion, make for marketable scholarly editions. (*Wylder's Hand* and *Within the Maze*, in particular, deserve to be on the shelves as Oxford World Classics, Penguin Classics, or Everyman paperbacks.³⁵)

But the direction I favour most relates to the question of what happened to representations of forgery in fiction in 1880s and 1890s. The detective story, I would think, becomes the most significant domain in which fiction represented forgery after 1879. Since the early 1850s, forgery had been increasingly integrated into narratives of detection. In *The Forger's Wife*, the thief-taker George Flower tracks down Harcourt/Roberts. In a rather different manner, Hartright pursues Glyde in *The Woman in White*. In "Hunted Down," Meltham (the insurance agent modelled on Henry P. Smith) follows the trail of the forger Mr. Slinkton (another incarnation of Wainewright). And in *Within the Maze*, it is a police detective who tries to hunt down the forger. By the 1880s and 1890s, forgery is most famously at home with Holmes.³⁶ (Conan Doyle even raises the possibility of forged typescript.³⁷) What, exactly, is the textual function of these – often very fleeting – *fin de siècle* references to forgery? With which real-life forgery cases are these stories in conversation? What of their literary antecedents? What is the nature of the relationship between Conan Doyle's treatment of forgery and those of contemporaries such as Wilde (in "Pen, Pencil, and Poison") or Gissing (in *The Nether World*)?³⁸ So the initial questions might go. The overarching claim that I would make for this thesis, then (if I may be so bold), is that it is an ambitious, pioneering and suggestive contribution to the study of the relations between real-life forgery and Victorian fiction.

Notes

¹ My summary is based on my reading of the official trial transcripts, reports in *The Times*, Woodruff, and M. Gilbert.

² One can track the story in most periodicals of the day. *Punch* offers one of the lighter examples: “The Tichborne Case,” *Punch* 61 (1871): 9 and 23; “Tichborne v. Lushington,” *Punch* 62 (1872): 47; “To the Tichborne Jury,” *Punch* 64 (1873): 172; “Contribution to the Tichborne Trial,” *Punch* 64 (1873): 241.

³ See McWilliam, Roe, N. Hughes.

⁴ See Woodruff 223-24, 386.

⁵ On the personalities of the legal functionaries, see M. Gilbert 120-216.

⁶ See *The Queen v. Orton* 4: 72, for example.

⁷ See Prior’s *Practical Penmanship* (1880), a fairly typical handwriting manual of the time.

⁸ See, for example, *The Queen v. Orton* 1: 94, 1: 152-54.

⁹ See *The Queen v. Orton* 4: 129-31. Simon Worrall gives a brief scientific account of what happens when a person forges another’s handwriting in *The Poet and the Murderer* (2002) 183-91.

¹⁰ Connor argues that the law report, rather than the transcript, is “the law’s identity as memory” (61). Nevertheless, the Tichborne criminal trial checked its details not with a law report of the civil trial, but with the transcript. In practice, the legal transcript remembers the particulars of a trial. Court officials did pay lip service to the distortions of human memory (see, for example, Cockburn’s summing up, *The Queen v. Orton* 9: 3772-773). But the margin for error seems remarkably narrow in the light of the quirks of the court’s own official memory, the transcript. That which was taken as evidence of an attempt to forge an identity - such as the Claimant’s failure to remember that he was an officer and not an ordinary soldier during his time in the Carabineers - might merely have been the Claimant’s reckless copying of his own memory.

¹¹ Examples occur throughout both trials and are too numerous to list, but see *The Tichborne Trial: the evidence of handwriting, comprising autograph letters of Roger Tichborne, Arthur Orton, and the Defendant in fac-simile* (1874). Partly provoked by the trials, the interest in the relationship between handwriting and identity was considerable at this time. See, for example, Edward Lumley (ed.), *The Art of Judging the Character of Individuals from their Handwriting and Style* (1875).

¹² Sutherland is perhaps the first to register this phenomenon in his introduction to *Is He Popenjoy?* ix.

¹³ Reade defined his “method” in *The Wandering Heir* as “the interweaving of imaginary circumstances with facts gathered impartially from experience, hearsay, and printed records” (Appendix 231). On

Reade’s working methods, see his preface to *Hard Cash*, and Burns, *Charles Reade* 172-230.

¹⁴ The letters are reprinted in *Readiana* 82-112. The first is to the *Daily News*, and the remainder to *Fact*.

¹⁵ My account of the Annesley case is summarised from the *DLB* and de la Torre.

¹⁶ See Appendix 232.

¹⁷ *The Wandering Heir* was originally published in the Christmas issue of *Graphic*. It was also published as a play on 18 Dec. 1872. The Tichborne and Annesley cases were so obviously related that Dr. Kenealy referred to the latter at the criminal trial (*The Queen v. Castro* 4: 21). As Reade points out, this was foolish (*Readiana* 108-112). Annesley had not, in fact, proven his case – precisely the conclusion that Dr. Kenealy did not want for his client.

¹⁸ See Burns, “Charles Reade and the Collinses.”

¹⁹ “*Trade Malice* was printed in the first edition of *Trade Malice and The Wandering Heir* before the story, as a preface or introduction; in the library edition it appears as an appendix to *The Wandering Heir*” (Elwin 245 n.1). The Appendix also gives a list of Reade’s sources for the Annesley case (232).

²⁰ The Collinses had made an exception to Reade’s working practice appear as though it were a sample. In a letter to the *Athenaeum* that was not published, except in *Trade Malice*, Reade called this critical strategy “The Sham-Sample Swindle.”

²¹ It is possible that Reade had G. P. R. James in mind. In James’s historical romance, *The King’s Highway* (which is partly set in Ireland), there are at least two “Pshaws” within the first forty pages (5, 31).

²² See Sutherland, Introduction, *Is He Popenjoy?*

²³ Kincaid has also noted the Dean’s unscrupulousness (243-44).

²⁴ Although Trollope’s claims not to have “cultivated” Wilkie Collins’s structural tricks (*Autobiography* 164-65), all of these sensational elements, for example, may be found in *The Woman in White*.

²⁵ I refer here to the Barsetshire novels. Trollope’s relation to sensation fiction is, I suggest, more than the “major borrowing” that Sutherland argues for (Introduction, *Popenjoy* x).

²⁶ Wynne has probably done most to raise Ellen Wood's profile in recent years. See *The Sensation Novel* 60-82 (2001); "See What a Big Wide Bed it is": Mrs. Henry Wood and the Philistine Imagination" (2001).

²⁷ *DLB*, unless otherwise noted.

²⁸ *Memorials of Mrs. Henry Wood* has its failings (see Wynne 64-65), but there seems to be little reason to doubt Charles's account of his mother's working practices.

²⁹ There are many examples. Only in chapter forty-seven, for instance, are we told that the hump-backed old man is not Ann Hopley's husband, but Adam Andinnian in disguise.

³⁰ Ellen Wood would again use the idea of the forger who is not a forger (and the name Strange) in *The Story of Charles Strange* (1888), in which Tom Strange is falsely convicted of forging a bill. His transport ship is wrecked off Botany Bay, and Tom returns to England, where he later dies in hiding.

³¹ In *The Bell of St. Paul's* (1889), by Walter Besant, the gypsy, Oliver, is exposed as a will-forger.

³² Very specifically, I would point to John's "Twisting the Newgate Tale: Dickens, Popular Culture and the Politics of Genre" 135.

³³ Carnell points out that this Braddon novel owes some of its details to Sadleir (158).

³⁴ I have in mind a monograph along the lines of Nancy Jane Tyson's *Eugene Aram: Literary History and Typology of the Scholar-Criminal* (1983).

³⁵ There is already a Dover edition of *Wylder's Hand* in print (1996), ISBN 048623570X.

³⁶ Most of the Holmes stories that refer to forgery were published between 1891 and 1893. They include: "A Scandal in Bohemia" (16); "The Man with the Twisted Lip" (112); "The Adventure of the Final Problem" (423); "The Adventure of the *Gloria Scott*" (314).

³⁷ In "A Case of Identity" (1891), Holmes remarks, "a typewriter has really quite as much individuality as a man's handwriting [...]" (60). If so, can one forge a typewritten script? Modernity did indeed bring the possibility of new types of forgeries. On the legal discussion of whether a telegram was an instrument that could be forged, for example, see *R. v. Riley*, 1 Q. B. 309 (1896), in Turner and Armitage 602-06.

³⁸ Useful models for such a study might be Peter Thomas, *Detection and Its Designs: Narrative and Power in Nineteenth-Century Detective Fiction* (1998), and Ronald R. Thomas, *Detective Fiction and the Rise of Forensic Science* (1999). The former Thomas is convinced of the self-reflexivity of fiction;

the latter adopts a far more historicist methodology. My preferred approach to the study of forgery in the detective stories of the 1880s and 1890s would be somewhere in between these two.

Works Cited¹

Primary²

Affair of the Neckless: Unpublished Memoirs of the Comte de Lamotte-Valois.

London, 1860.

Ainsworth, W. Harrison. 2 vols. *The Star-Chamber*. London, 1854.

Alexander, Alexander. *The Stirling Peerage*. Ed. Simon MacGregor and William Barclay David Donald Turnbull. Edinburgh, 1839.

Alison, Archibald (anon.). "Causes of the Increase of Crime." *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* 56 (1844): 1-14.

---. "The Historical Romance." *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* 58 (1845): 341-56. Rpt. in Eigner and Worth 58-83.

Allen, A. G. "Thomas Griffiths Wainewright, Poisoner." *Lives of Twelve Bad Men: Original Studies of Eminent Scoundrels by Various Hands*. Ed. Thomas Seccombe. London, 1894. 292-321.

Allibone, Austin S. *A Critical Dictionary of English Literature, and British and American Authors, Living and Deceased*. London, 1859-71. 3 vols.

Altogether Wrong. 3 vols. London, 1863.

Aytoun, W. E. "Letters from a Lighthouse – No. I." *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* 81 (1857): 227-42.

¹ By primary, I mean those texts that were originally published during the Victorian period, or earlier. (The exceptions are *DNB* and *Who Was Who*.)

² In several footnotes to the thesis I have given bracketed references to periodical articles purely for the purpose of illustration. In order to keep the bibliography to a manageable length, such references have been excluded.

Bagehot, Walter (anon.). Rev. of *The Adventures of Philip*, by W. M. Thackeray.

Spectator 35 (1862): 885-6. Rpt. in Tillotson and Hawes 305-09.

---. Rev. of "The Waverley Novels." *National Review* 6 (1858): 444-72. Rpt. in Skilton 25-26.

"Bank Notes and Forgeries." *The People's (& Howitt's) Journal* 2 n.s. (1850): 183-85.

Barber, W. H. *The Case of Mr. W. H. Barber, containing Copies of the Documents Submitted to the government, resulting in Her Majesty's Royal Pardon*. 9th ed. London, 1853.

---. "The Fletcher and Smyth Frauds." Letter. *The Times* 20 Aug. 1853: 12.

Barton, George Burnett, ed. *Literature in New South Wales*. Sydney, 1866.

---. ed. *Poets and Prose-Writers of New South Wales*. Sydney, 1866.

Belial. 2 vols. London, 1865.

Benedict, Frank Lee. 3 vols. *Mr. Vaughan's Heir*. London, 1874.

Bertram, James Glass. 3 vols. *The Story of a Stolen Heir*. London, 1858.

Besant, Walter. *The Bell of St. Paul's*. 3 vols. London, 1889.

Binny, John. "Thieves and Swindlers." *London Labour and the London Poor*. Vol. 4.

By Henry Mayhew. Ed. John R. Rosenberg. New York: Dover, 1968. 4 vols. 273-392.

Bonwick, James. "Hamst's Handbook of Fictitious Names: Quintus Servinton: Henry Savary." *Notes and Queries* 4 s. 2: 14 Nov. 1868: 462-63.

Borrow, George. *Lavengro*. 1851. London: John Murray, 1900.

Bulwer-Lytton, Edward. "Caxtoniana: A Series of Essays on Life, Literature, and Manners (Part XVI)." *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* 93 (1863): 545-60.

---. *The Disowned*. 1828. Colburn's Modern Novelists. Vol. 3. London, 1835.

- . *England and the English*. 1833. Ed. Standish Meacham. Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1970.
- . *Ernest Maltravers*. 1837. London, 1851.
- . *Eugene Aram*. 3 vols. London, 1832.
- . Letter to Emma Robinson. 4 Jan. 1867. "Robinson, Emma": item 10.
- . Letter to George Henry Lewes. 24 Dec. 1846. Bodleian Library. MS Eng. Lett. d. 40.
- . Letter to Marguerite Gardiner, Countess Blessington (handwritten copy). 20 Dec. 1846. Hertfordshire County Records Office. DE/K C26/34.
- . *Lucretia; or The Children of Night*. 1846. Rev. ed. 1853. Ed. Juliet John. *Cult Criminals: The Newgate Novels, 1830-47*. Vol. 3. New York: Routledge, 1998. 6 vols.
- . *Night and Morning*. 1841. London, 1851.
- . "On Art in Fiction." 1838. Eigner and Worth 22-38.
- . "On The Different Kinds of Prose Fiction, With Some Apology for the Fiction of the Author." *The Disowned*. vii-xl.
- . *Paul Clifford*. 1830. 2 vols. New York, 1835.
- . Preface. *Night and Morning*. 1845 ed. *Lord Lytton's Novels*. Knebworth Edition, vol. 2: vii-xi. Rpt. in Skilton 45-50.
- . "A Word to the Public." 1847. *Lucretia; or The Children of Night*. 297-334.
- Bradbury, Henry. *On the Security and Manufacture of Bank Notes: A Lecture*. London, 1856.
- Braddon, Mary Elizabeth. *The Doctor's Wife*. London, 1864. Ed. Lyn Pykett. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1998.

---. *Eleanor's Victory*. 1863. Stroud: Alan Sutton, 1996.

---. *Henry Dunbar: The Story of an Outcast*. 3 vols. London, 1864.

---. *Lady Audley's Secret*. 1862. Ed. David Skilton. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1987.

Bradford, John. *Roger Whatmough's Will*. London, 1864.

Brontë, Charlotte. Letter to Elizabeth Gaskell. 26 Apr. 1852. Rpt. in Easson 200.

Brougham, Henry (anon.). "Capital Punishment for Forgery." *Edinburgh Review* 52 (1831): 398-410.

Burke, Peter. *Celebrated Trials Connected With the Upper Classes of Society in the Relations of Public Life*. London, 1851.

Burke, Sir John Bernard. *Vicissitudes of Families*. 1859. London. 1883. 2 vols.

Carlyle, Thomas. "Chartism." 1839. *Selected Works, Reminiscences and Letters*. Ed. Julian Symons. London: Hart-Davis, 1955. 257-94.

"Case of Roupell, the Forger." Leading Article. *The Times* 26 Sept. 1862: 6.

"Charge of Conspiracy and Forgery at Cheltenham." *The Times* 11 Nov. 1842: 6.

"Charge of Poisoning the Late Sir R. T. Ricketts." *The Times* 3 Jan. 1843: 7.

"Charles Dickens and *David Copperfield*." *Fraser's Magazine* 42 (1850): 698-710.

Charlesworth, Edward Gomersall. *Ironopolis*. 2 vols. London, 1874.

"Circumlocution versus Circumvention." *Saturday Review* 22 Nov. 1856: 649-50.

"Civil Actions: Roupell." *The Times* 18 July 1863: 12.

"Civil Actions: Roupell." *The Times* 25 July 1863: 11.

"The Civil List Pensions." *Saturday Review* 20 July 1861: 67-68.

"Civilian." *Sensation Trials; or Causes Célèbres*. London, 1865.

Claude de Vesci: A Tale. 2 vols. London, 1856.

"Clocks for the New Palace at Westminster." *The Times* 14 July 1847: 4.

Collins, Wilkie. *Armada*. 1866. Ed. John Sutherland. Harmondsworth: Penguin,

1995.

---. *Basil: A Story of Modern Life*. 3 vols. London, 1852.

---. "Fauntleroy." *Wilkie Collins: The Complete Shorter Fiction*. Ed. Julian Thompson. London: Robinson, 1995. 257-67.

---. *The Law and the Lady*. 1875. Ed. Jenny Bourne Taylor. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1992.

---. *The Moonstone*. 1868. Ed. J. I. M. Stewart. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1986.

---. *No Name*. 1863. Ed. Virginia Blain. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1986.

---. *Poor Miss Finch*. 1872. Ed. Catherine Peters. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1995.

---. *The Woman in White*. 1860. Ed. John Sutherland. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1996.

Colomb, George Hatton. *Hearths and Watchfires*. 3 vols. London, 1862.

A Complete Report of the Trial of Miss Madeleine Smith, for the Alleged Poisoning of Pierre Emile L'Angelier, Revised and Corrected by John Morison, Esq., Advocate. Edinburgh, 1857.

"Contribution to the Tichborne Trial." *Punch* 64 (1873): 241.

"Convict Capitalists." *All the Year Round* 3 (1860): 201-04.

"Conviction of Rev. Dr. Bailey for Forgery." Leading Article. *The Times* 13 Feb. 1843: 4.

Cook, Edward Dutton. *The Trials of the Tredgolds*. 3 vols. London, 1864.

"Criminal Trials: Attempted Suicide of Henry Savery." *The Times* 13 Dec. 1824: 2.

"Criminal Trials: Edward Strange, for Forgery." *The Times* 12 Aug. 1862: 11.

"Criminal Trials: Francis William Hewitt, for Forgery." *The Times* 20 Dec. 1862: 11.

"Criminal Trials: Frank Merridew Goodman, for Forgery." *The Times* 8 Apr. 1868: 9.

"Criminal Trials: H. Pratt, for Forgery." *The Times* 14 Apr. 1845: 8.

"Criminal Trials: Henry Savery, for Forgery." *The Times* 28 Dec. 1824: 3.

"Criminal Trials: Henry Savery, for Forgery." *The Times* 6 Apr. 1825: 3.

"Criminal Trials: J. T. Saward, for Forgery." *The Times* 7 Mar. 1857: 9.

"Criminal Trials: Noel Desiré Luco, for Forgery." *The Times* 15 Dec. 1868: 11.

"Criminal Trials: Rev. Dr. William Bailey." *The Times* 2 Feb. 1843: 5.

"Criminal Trials: Roupell, for Forgery." 25 Sept. 1862: 9.

"Criminal Trials: Thomas Closs, for Forgery." *The Times* 3 Nov. 1857: 9.

"Criminal Trials: Thomas Peat, for Forgery." *The Times* 21 Aug. 1845: 8.

Crump, Arthur. *A Key to the London Money Market*. London, 1872.

"A Curious Speculation." *The Times* 2 Apr. 1856: 11.

Dallas, E. S. *The Gay Science*. 1866. Extract rpt. in Skilton, *Early and Mid-Victorian Fiction* 135-38.

---. (anon.). Rev. of *Great Expectations*, by Charles Dickens. *The Times* 17 Oct. 1861: 6.

---. (anon.). Rev. of *Lady Audley's Secret*, by Mary Elizabeth Braddon. *The Times* 18 Nov. 1862: 8. Rpt. in Skilton, *Early and Mid-Victorian Fiction* 128-31.

Darwin, Charles. *The Descent of Man and Selection According to Sex*. 1871. London, 1890.

"Death of Mr. John Sadleir, MP for Sligo." *Law Times* 23 Feb. 1856: 241.

"Death of Sir Richard Hugh Smyth, alias 'Tom Provis' in Dartmoor Prison." *The Times* 29 May 1855: 9.

"Deaths: John Sadleir." *The Times* 19 Feb. 1856: 9.

Defoe, Daniel. *Robinson Crusoe*. 1719. Ed. J. Donald Crowley. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1998.

"The Defoe Monument." *Saturday Review* 24 Sept. 1870: 391-92.

De Quincey, Thomas. "Homer and the Homeridae." *Blackwood's Edinburgh*

- Magazine* 50 (1841). Extract rpt. in *Defoe: The Critical Heritage*, ed. Pat Rogers. London: Routledge, 1972. 117-18.
- Dickens, Charles. *Barnaby Rudge*. 1841. Ed. Gordon Spence. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1997.
- . "The Chimes." 1843. *The Christmas Books: Volume 1*. Ed. Michael Slater. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1985. 149-245.
- . "A Christmas Carol." 1843. *The Christmas Books: Volume 1*. Ed. Michael Slater. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1985. 45-134.
- . "Conversazione: Birmingham Polytechnic Institution." 1844. Extract rpt. in Newlin 888.
- . "Curious Misprint in the *Edinburgh Review*." *Household Words* 1 Aug. 1857: 97-100.
- . *David Copperfield*. 1850. Ed. Nina Burgis with an Introduction and Notes by Andrew Sanders. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1997.
- . *Dombey and Son*. 1848. London: Chapman and Hall, 1907.
- . *Great Expectations*. 1861. Ed. Charlotte Mitchell. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1996.
- . *Little Dorrit*. 1857. Ed. Stephen Wall and Helen Small. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1998.
- . "A Message from the Sea." 1860. *Christmas Stories I. Complete Works of Charles Dickens*. London: Heron, 1967. 303-29.
- . *Pictures from Italy*. 1846. Ed. Kate Flint. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1998.
- . "Red Tape." *Household Words* 15 Feb. 1851: 481-84.
- . Speech to the Reform Association. 27 June 1855. *The Speeches of Charles Dickens*. Ed. K. J. Fielding. 197-208.

- . *A Tale of Two Cities*. 1859. Ed. George Woodcock. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1970.
- . "The Thousand and One Humbugs." *Household Words* 21 Apr. 1855: 265-67, 28 Apr. 1855: 289-92, 5 May 1855: 313-16.
- . "An Unsettled Neighbourhood." 1854. Extract rpt. in Newlin 889.
- "Difference of Time in Railway Clocks at Brussels." *The Times* 4 Nov. 1845: 7.
- Disraeli, Benjamin. *Coningsby*. 1844. London: George Lehmann, 1948.
- . *Sybil; or, The Two Nations*. 1845. Ed. Thom Braun. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1985.
- . *Tancred; or, the New Crusade*. 2 vols. London, 1847.
- Dodd, George, and W. H. Wills (anon.). "I Promise to Pay." *Household Words* 27 Dec. 1856: 556-59.
- Doyle, Sir Arthur Conan. *Sherlock Holmes: The Complete Illustrated Short Stories*. London: Chancellor, 1992.
- . "The Adventure of the *Gloria Scott*." 1893. *Illustrated Short Stories* 304-18.
- . "The Adventure of the Final Problem." 1893. *Illustrated Short Stories* 421-36.
- . "A Case of Identity." 1891. *Illustrated Short Stories* 50-64.
- . "The Man with the Twisted Lip." 1891. *Illustrated Short Stories* 100-18.
- . "A Scandal in Bohemia." 1891. *Illustrated Short Stories* 9-28.
- Dyce, Gilbert [i.e. Percy Fitzgerald]. *Bella Donna; or the Cross Before the Name*. 2 vols. London, 1864.
- Edgeworth, Maria. *Helen*. 1834. London: Macmillan, 1903.
- Edwardson, John. *Hollowhill Farm*. 3 vols. London, 1871.
- Eiloart, Elizabeth. *From Thistles – Grapes?* 3 vols. London, 1870.
- Eliot, George. *Adam Bede*. 1859. Ed. Valentine Cunningham. Oxford: Oxford UP,

1996.

---. "The Natural History of German Life." *Westminster Review* 66 (1856): 51-79.

Rpt. in *Selected Essays, Poems and Other Writings*. Ed. A. S. Byatt and

Nicholas Warren. Harmondsworth: Penguin 1990. 107-39.

---. *Romola*. 1863. Ed. Leonée Ormond. London: Dent, 1999.

Ellis, Havelock. *The Criminal*. 1890. London: Walter Scott, 1910.

"Emma Robinson." *Athenaeum* 14 June 1862: 793.

Evans, David Morier. *The Commerical Crisis 1847-1848*. London, 1848.

---. *Facts, Failures, and Frauds: Revelations Financial, Mercantile, Criminal*.

London, 1859.

Exchequer Bills Forgery. Report of the Commissioners. London, 1842.

"The Exchequer-Bill Forgers." *The Times* 2 Nov. 1841: 5.

"The Exchequer-Bill Forgery." Letter. *The Times* 23 Dec. 1841: 4.

"Exchequer-Bills Fraud." *The Times* 28 Oct. 1841: 4.

"Exchequer-Bills Fraud." *The Times* 20 Dec. 1841: 4.

"Exchequer-Bill Fraud." *The Times* 28 Dec. 1841: 6.

"Extensive Seizure of Watches." *The Times* 13 Sept. 1845: 6.

"Extracts from the Journal of a Visit to New South Wales in 1853." *Fraser's*

Magazine 48 (1853): 506-18, 634-47.

Farrow, Morley. *After Baxtow's Death*. London, 1870.

"Fashionable Forgery." *Punch* 23 July 1870: 42.

Fitzgerald, Edward. Letter to Frederick Tennyson. 29 Jan. 1867. Rpt. in Page 124.

Fitzgerald, Percy Hetherington. *A Famous Forgery; Being the Story of the*

Unfortunate Dr. Dodd. London, 1865.

"The 'Flash' Attorney." *Bentley's Miscellany* 29 (1851): 509-12.

"Foreign Watches at the Customs Houses." *The Times* 26 Jan. 1849: 6.

"Foreign Watches and Jewellery." *The Times* 16 Oct. 1845: 5.

"The Forged Bills." *Saturday Review* 8 Mar. 1873: 313-14.

"Forged Wills." Leading Article. *The Times* 5 Sept. 1843: 4.

"Forgeries of Parish Registers." *The Times* 16 Apr. 1840: 4.

"Forgery." *Hobart Town Courier and Van Diemen's Land Gazette* 4 Sept. 1840: 2.

"Forgery and Coining." *The Times* 15 July 1858: 7.

"Forgery by Solicitors." *Law Times* 14 Dec. 1861: 94.

Forster, John. *The Life of Charles Dickens*. 1874. London: Chapman and Hall, 1911.

2 vols.

---. (anon.). Rev. of Defoe's *Works*. Oxford, 1842. 20 vols., and *The Works of Daniel*

De Foe; with a Memoir of his Life and Writings, by William Hazlitt, jun. 3

vols. *Edinburgh Review* 82 (1845): 480-532.

---. (anon.). Rev. of *Lucretia; or, the Children of Night*, by Edward Bulwer-Lytton.

Examiner 5 Dec. 1846: 771-72.

---. (anon.). Rev. of *Ruth*, by Elizabeth Gaskell. *Examiner* 22 Jan. 1853: 51-53. Rpt. in

Easson 218-25.

Gaskell, Elizabeth. *Mary Barton*. 1848. Ed. Stephen Gill. Harmondsworth: Penguin,

1985.

---. *Ruth*. 1853. Ed. Alan Shelston. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1985.

Gissing, George. *The Nether World*. 1889. Ed. Stephen Gill. Oxford: Oxford UP,

1999.

Glasgow Poisoning Case: Unabridged Report of the Evidence in this Extraordinary

Trial, With All the Passionate Love Letters Written By the Prisoner to the

Deceased, and Numerous Illustrations, Including Portrait of Madeleine Smith.
London, 1857.

“Guildhall: Lady Ricketts Accused of Forgery.” *The Times* 12 June 1843: 8.

The Great Forgeries of William Roupell, Late MP for Lambeth. Official Report of the Trial at Guildford, in the Case of Roupell v. Waite. London, 1862.

“Mr. H. Savery.” *Hobart Town Courier and Van Diemen’s Land Gazette* 2 Oct. 1840: 2.

“Mr. H. Savery.” *Hobart Town Courier and Van Diemen’s Land Gazette* 30 Oct. 1840: 2.

Hamerton, Eugénie. *Jeanne Laraguay*. 3 vols. London, 1864.

Hardy, Mary. *Paul Wynter’s Sacrifice*. 3 vols. London, 1869.

Harris, Richard. *Mr. Bumpkin’s Lawsuit; or, How to Win Your Opponent’s Case.*
London, 1883.

---. *Hints on Advocacy*. 1879. 17th ed. London: Stevens and Sons, 1937.

---. *Illustrations in Advocacy*. 1879. 4th ed. London: Stevens and Haynes, 1904.

---. *Mayfair to Millbank*. 3 vols. London, 1870.

---. ed. *Reminiscences of Sir Henry Hawkins, Baron Brampton*. 2 vols. London: Edward Arnold, 1904.

Hay, Mary Cecil. *Victor and Vanquished*. 3 vols. London, 1874.

Haydon, George Henry. *The Australian Emigrant: a Rambling Story, containing as much fact as fiction*. London, 1854.

Hayes, John Lord. *Trial of Lord Stirling*. Washington, 1853.

Hazlitt, William Carew, ed. *Essays and Criticisms*, by Thomas Griffiths Wainewright.
London, 1880.

---. Introduction. Hazlitt 5-81.

The Heath House and Ashton Cause: Report of the most extraordinary Trial of Smyth v. Smyth and Others, tried at the Gloucester Assizes, Commencing 8 Aug. 1853. 2nd ed. Bristol, 1854.

“Henry Wells Young.” *Law Times* 8 Mar. 1862: 248.

Higginson, Francis. *Dangerous Consequences of Employing Bankers or Agents, and Depositing Money Deeds or Securities with Attornies.* London, 1856.

Hoey, Francis Cashel. *A Golden Sorrow.* 3 vols. London. 1872.

Hood, Thomas. *A Disputed Inheritance: The Story of A Cornish Family.* London, 1863.

Hotten, John Camden. “Wainewright, the Poisoner.” *Hunted Down, A Story, By Charles Dickens, with Some Account of Thomas Griffiths Wainewright, the Poisoner.* London, 1871. 5-28.

Houstoun, Matilda Charlotte. *Such Things Are.* 3 vols. London, 1863.

How to Detect Forged Banknotes. London, 1856.

Howitt, William. 2 vols. *Land, Labour and Gold.* London, 1855.

James, G. P. R. *The Forgery; or, Best Intentions.* 3 vols. London, 1849.

---. “General Preface.” *Works.* Vol. 1.

---. *Gowrie; or, the King’s Plot.* 1849. London, 1851.

---. *An Investigation of the Circumstances Attending the Murder of John, Earl of Gowrie and Alexander Ruthven, by Order of King James the Sixth of Scotland; with an Examination of the forged Restalrig Letters brought forward to exculpate the king.* London, 1849.

---. *The King’s Highway.* *Works.* Vol. 11.

---., ed. *Rizzio; or, Scenes from Europe during the Sixteenth Century, By the late Mr. Ireland.* 3 vols. 1849.

- . *The Works of G. P. R. James*. London, 1844-49. 21 vols.
- Jeaffreson, John Cordy. *Lottie Darling*. London, 1873.
- . *A Woman in Spite of Herself*. 3 vols. London, 1872.
- "Jem the Penman." *Notes and Queries* 4: 4 s. (95) 23 Oct. 1869: 349.
- Jenkin, Henrietta (anon.). *Violet Bank and its Inmates*. London, 1858.
- Jevons, William Stanley. *Money and the Mechanism of Exchange*. London, 1875.
- "John Lang." *Notes and Queries* 4: 4 (6 Nov. 1869): 397.
- "John Sadleir: Letter to His Brother." *The Times* 21 June 1856: 9.
- "John Sadleir: Speech at Carlow." *The Times* 27 Aug. 1852: 5.
- Jones, Ernest. *Woman's Wrongs*. 1850-51. *Notes to the People*. London: Merlin, 1967. 2 vols.
- "Joseph Shaw." *Law Times* 29 Mar. 1862: 283.
- Lang, John (anon.). "Baron Wald." *Household Words* 7 May 1859: 537-41.
- . *Botany Bay*. London, 1859.
- . (anon.). *Emily Orford*. *Fraser's Magazine* 48 (1853): 98-114, 220-33, 326-41, 401-16, 659-70.
- . *The Ex-Wife: A Novel*. London, 1859.
- . *The Forger's Wife*. London, 1855.
- . (anon.). "Kate Crawford." *Household Words* 21 May 1859: 596-600.
- . (anon.). *Lucy Cooper*. 1846. Ed. Victor Crittenden. Canberra: Mulini, 1992.
- . (anon.). "Miss Saint Felix." *Household Words* 28 May 1859: 613-17.
- . *My Friend's Wife; or York, You're Wanted*. London, 1859.
- . (anon.). "A Special Convict." *Household Words* 23 Apr. 1859: 489-91.
- . *Too Clever By Half; or the Harroways*. [By the Mofussilite.] London, 1853.
- . *Too Much Alike; or the Three Calendars*. London, 1855.

---. *The Wetherbys, Father and Son; or, Sundry Chapters of Indian Experience.*

London, 1853.

Lee, Holme [i.e. Harriet Parr]. *Maude Talbot*. 3 vols. London, 1854.

Le Fanu, Sheridan. *The House By the Churchyard*. 1863. Classic Irish Novels ser.

Belfast: Appletree, 1992.

---. "Mr. Justice Harbottle." *In a Glass Darkly*. Ed Robert Tracy. Oxford: Oxford UP,

1993. 83-118.

---. *Uncle Silas*. 1864. Ed. Victor Sage. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 2000.

---. *Wylder's Hand*. 3 vols. London, 1864.

Lemon, Mark. *Loved at Last: A Story*. 3 vols. London, 1864.

Lever, Charles. *Davenport Dunn; or, the Man of the Day*. 3 vols. London, 1859.

Lewes, G. H. (anon.). "Historical Romance: *The Foster Brother*, and *Whitehall*."

Westminster Review 45 (1846): 34-55.

---. (anon.). "Literature." *The Leader* 18 July 1857: 689-90.

---. (anon.). "Realism in Art: Recent German Fiction." *Westminster Review* 70 (1858):

493-96. Rpt. in Skilton, *Early and Mid-Victorian Fiction* 101-04.

The Life of Robert Avery. Southampton, 1805.

Lumley, Edward, ed. *The Art of Judging the Character of Individuals from their*

Handwriting and Style. London, 1875.

Lyall, Alfred. "The Anglo-Indian Novelist." *Edinburgh Review* 190 (1899): 415-

39.

Lyfield, Frank. *Aubrey Court*. 3 vols. London, 1865.

Maine, Sir Henry. *Ancient Law*. 1861. London: Dent, 1954.

Mansel, Henry Longueville (anon.). Rev. of *No Name*, by Wilkie Collins. *Quarterly*

Review 113 (1863): 495-96. Rpt. in Page 138-40.

- . "Sensation Novels." *Quarterly Review* 113 (1862): 481-89. Rpt. in Skilton, *Early and Mid-Victorian Fiction* 74-78.
- Marsh, Anne (anon.). *The Wilmingtons*. 3 vols. London, 1850.
- Melville, Herman. *Bartleby, The Scrivener*. 1853. *Melville's Short Novels*. Ed. Dan McCall. New York: Norton, 2002. 3-34.
- Mill, John Stuart. "The Subjection of Women." 1869. *On Liberty and Other Essays*. Ed. John Gray. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1998. 471-582.
- Miller, Thomas. *Dorothy Dovedale's Trials*. 2 vols. London, 1864.
- "Mitigation of Capital Punishment to a Forger." *Notes and Queries* 5 (132) 8 May 1852: 444-45.
- Moir, George. "Modern Romance and Novel." *Encyclopaedia Britannica*. 7th ed. 1842. Vol. 19: 334-59. Rpt. in Eigner and Worth 39-57.
- Morley, Henry (anon.). "A Criminal Trial." *Household Words* 21 June 1856: 529-34.
- "Newspaper Comments on Legal Proceedings." *Saturday Review* 20 Jan. 1872: 77-78.
- Newton v Askew* 11 Beavan 145, 50 ER 772 [1848].
- Newton v Ricketts* 10 Beavan 525, 50 ER 684 [1847].
- Newton v Ricketts* 9 House of Lords Cases Clark's 262, 11 ER, 731 [1861].
- Newton v Rowe and Another* 1 Carrington and Kirwan 616, 174 ER 961 [1844].
- Oliphant, Margaret. "Bulwer." *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* 77 (1855): 221-33.
- . "Novels (No. II)." *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* 102 (1867): 257-80.
- . *Phoebe, Junior*. London. 1876. London: Virago, 1989.
- . "Sensation Novels." *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* 91 (1862): 564-84.
- Paull, Margaret Agnes (anon.). *Still Waters*. Leipzig, 1857.
- Pickering, Emma. *Firm in the Struggle*. 3 vols. London, 1872.
- Pike, Lucas Owen. *A History of Crime in England*. Vol. 2. London, 1873-76. 2 vols.

“Police: John Ford, and others, for Forgery.” *The Times* 16 Aug. 1847: 7.

“Police: Lady Ricketts, for Forgery.” *The Times* 11 Nov. 1842: 6.

“Police: Rev. William Bailey, for Forgery.” *The Times* 5 Nov. 1842: 7.

“Police: Rev. William Bailey, for Forgery.” *The Times* 2 Dec. 1842: 7.

“Police: Rev. William Bailey, for Forgery.” *The Times* 9 Dec. 1842: 7.

“Police: Rev. William Bailey, for Forgery.” *The Times* 20 Dec. 1842: 6.

Pomeroy, John [i.e. Mrs. A. D. Pollard]. *A Double Secret*. 3 vols. London, 1870.

Pope, Alexander. *The Dunciad*. 1743. *Pope: Poetical Works*. Ed. Herbert Davis.

Oxford: Oxford UP, 1985. 425-619.

“Mr. Powell.” *The Times* 10 Jan. 1850: 4.

Powell, Thomas. *The Living Authors of England*. New York, 1849. 2 vols.

Prior, W. D. *Practical Penmanship; or How to Acquire a Good handwriting, etc....*

London, 1880.

Provis, Thomas (calling himself Richard Hugh Smyth). *The Victim of Fatality; or the*

Claimant of Ashton Court. Bristol, 1854.

The Queen v. Thomas Castro, otherwise Arthur Orton, otherwise Sir Roger

Charles Doughty Tichborne, Bart. Proceedings on the Trial at the Bar.

London, 1873-74. 9 vols.

Re Ricketts' Trusts 1 Johnson and Hemming 70, 70 ER 666 [1860].

Re Straford 16 Beavan 27, 51 ER 686 [1852].

Reade, Charles. *Hard Cash: A Matter-of-Fact Romance*. 3 vols. London, 1863.

---. *Readiana: Comments on Current Events*. London, 1883.

---. *The Wandering Heir*. 1872. London: Chatto and Windus, 1905.

“Recent Works of Fiction.” *Prospective Review* 30 Apr. 1853: 222-47. Rpt. in Eigner

and Worth 84-92.

Report of the Trial of Madeleine Smith Before the High Court of Judiciary at

Edinburgh, June 30th to July 9th 1857 for the Alleged Poisoning of Pierre

Emile L'Angelier, by Alexander Forbes Irvine, Advocate. Edinburgh, 1857.

"Resignation of John Sadleir." *The Times* 9 Jan. 1854: 10.

"Resignation of John Sadleir." *The Times* 11 Jan. 1854: 9.

Rev. of *The Adventures of Philip*, by W. M. Thackeray. *Saturday Review* 23 Aug.

1862: 223-24. Rpt. in Tillotson and Hawes 309-14.

Rev. of *The Australian Emigrant*, by G. H. Haydon. *Athenaeum* 8 July 1854: 846.

Rev. of "The Chimes," by Charles Dickens. *The Economist* 18 Jan. 1845: 53-54. Rpt.

in Skilton, *Early and Mid-Victorian Fiction* 42-45.

Rev. of *Clara Morrison*, by Catherine Helen Spence. *Athenaeum* 15 July 1854: 879.

Rev. of *A Collection of Reports of Celebrated Trials, Civil and Criminal*, ed. W. O.

Woodall. *Athenaeum* 17 Jan. 1874: 84-85.

Rev. of *Come of Her Vow*, by Elise Thorp. *Athenaeum* 19 Sept. 1874: 373-74.

Rev. of *Facts, Failures, and Frauds*, by D. M. Evans. *Athenaeum* 5 Feb. 1859: 183-

85.

Rev. of *The Forgery; or, Best Intentions*, by G. P. R. James. *Athenaeum* 16 Dec.

1848: 1263.

Rev. of *The Forgery; or, Best Intentions*, by G. P. R. James. *Spectator* 9 Dec. 1848:

1189.

Rev. of *Gentle Blood; or, the Secret Marriage*, by J. R. O'Flanagan. *Athenaeum* 7

Dec. 1861: 763-64.

Rev. of *Geoffrey's Wife*, by Stanley Hope. *Athenaeum* 2 May 1874: 593.

Rev. of *A Golden Heart: A Novel*, by Tom Hood. *Athenaeum* 10 Aug. 1867: 172-73.

Rev. of *The Gold-Worshippers*, by Emma Robinson. *Athenaeum* 29 Mar. 1851: 350

Rev. of *Madeleine Graham*, by Emma Robinson. *Athenaeum* 12 Mar. 1864: 371.

Rev. of *Madeleine Graham*, by Emma Robinson. *Saturday Review* 12 Mar. 1864:
330-32.

Rev. of *Madeleine Graham*, by Emma Robinson. *Spectator* 20 Feb. 1864: 215-16.

Rev. of *Mayfair to Millbank*, by Richard Harris. *Athenaeum* 4 June 1870: 739.

Rev. of *Orley Farm*, by Anthony Trollope. *Cornhill Magazine* 6 (1862): 702-04. Rpt.
in Smalley 157-59.

Rev. of *Orley Farm*, by Anthony Trollope. *Examiner* 25 Oct. 1862: 677-78. Rpt. in
Smalley 154-55.

Rev. of *Orley Farm*, by Anthony Trollope. *National Magazine* 13 (1863): 48. Rpt. in
Smalley 164.

Rev. of *Orley Farm*, by Anthony Trollope. *Saturday Review* 11 Oct. 1862: 444-45.

Rev. of *Phoebe, Junior*, by Margaret Oliphant. *Saturday Review* 22 July 1876: 112-
13.

Rev. of *Quintus Servinton*, by Henry Savery. *Athenaeum* 28 Jan. 1832: 64.

Rev. of *Ruth*, by Elizabeth Gaskell. *English Review* 19 (Apr. 1853): 193-94. Rpt. in
Easson 254-55.

Rev. of *Ruth*, by Elizabeth Gaskell. *Nonconformist* 26 Jan. 1853: 84-85. Rpt. in
Easson 226-29.

Rev. of *Ruth*, by Elizabeth Gaskell. *Prospective Review* 9 (1853): 222-47. Rpt. in
Easson 287-96.

Rev. of *Sir Gilbert: A Novel*. *Athenaeum* 16 Apr. 1859: 514.

Rev. of *A Strange World*, by Mary Elizabeth Braddon. *Athenaeum* 13 Feb. 1875: 225.

Rev. of *Victor and Vanquished*, by Mary Cecil Hay. *Athenaeum* 24 Jan. 1874: 120.

Rev. of *The Way We Live Now*, by Anthony Trollope. *Spectator* 26 June 1875: 825.

Rev. of *Who is He?*, by the Marquis of ****. *Athenaeum* 8 Mar. 1879: 310.

Rev. of *Wylder's Hand*, by Sheridan Le Fanu. *Athenaeum* 12 Mar. 1864: 371-72.

"The Rights of Conscience in Danger. A Letter to William Roupell, MP." By a
Lambeth Elector, n.p. 1856/57.

Robinson, Emma. *The Gold-Worshippers; or, Days We Live In, a Future Historical Novel*. London, 1851.

---. Letter to the General Committee of the Royal Literary Fund, n. d. [1869?]: item
12. "Robinson, Emma."

---. *Madeleine Graham*. London, 1864.

---. "Madeleine Graham." Letter. *Athenaeum* 19 Mar. 1864: 407.

---. *Whitefriars; or the Court of Charles II*. 1844. London: Cassell, 1909.

"Robinson, Emma." *Royal Literary Fund*. M1077/60. [File 1558.]

Roscoe, William Caldwell. "W. M. Thackeray, Artist and Moralist." *National Review* 2 (1856): 177-213. Rpt. in Eigner and Worth 119-47.

"Roupell: Address to His Constituents." *The Times* 2 Feb. 1859: 8.

"Roupell: Address to His Constituents at Kennington." *The Times* 17 Jan. 1860: 4.
Roupell and Another v Haws and Others 3 Foster and Finlason 784, 176 ER 359
[1863].

"The Roupell Case." *Saturday Review* 23 Aug. 1862: 212-13.

"The Roupell Case." Leading Article. *The Times* 20 Aug. 1862: 8.

"The Roupell Case." *The Times* 21 Aug. 1862: 8.

"The Roupell Case." *The Times* 22 Aug. 1862: 7.

"Roupell Case: Actions Arising." *The Times* 13 July 1863: 12.

"Roupell: Declines a Ticket-of-Leave." *The Times* 8 May 1872: 14.

"Roupell: Declines a Ticket-of-Leave." *The Times* 10 May 1872: 7.

“Roupell Forgeries.” Leading Article. *The Times* 28 July 1863: 9.

“Roupell: Health of.” *The Times* 16 Apr. 1873: 9.

“Mr. Roupell and His Constituents.” Leading Article. *The Times* 30 Jan. 1861: 8.

“Roupell in Horsemonger Lane Gaol.” *The Times* 8 Sept. 1862: 9.

“Roupell: Release of.” *The Times* 6 Oct. 1874: 9.

“Roupell: Release, on a Ticket-of-Leave.” *The Times* 22 Jan. 1869: 12.

Routledge, George and Sons. Letter to the General Committee of the Royal Literary Fund. 3 Jan. 1870. “Robinson, Emma”: item 14.

Savery, Henry. *The Hermit in Van Diemen's Land*. 1829. Ed. Cecil Hadgraft. Melbourne: U of Queensland P, 1964.

---. *Quintus Servinton: A Tale Founded Upon Incidents of Real Occurrence*. Ed. Cecil H. Hadgraft. Brisbane: Jacaranda P, 1962.

Secrets of My Office. By a Bill Broker. London, 1863.

Sergeant, Adeline. “Mrs. Henry Wood.” *Women Novelists of Victoria's Reign: A Book of Appreciations*. London, 1897. 174-92.

“The Session and the Ministry.” *Fraser's Magazine* 48 (1853): 364-70.

Sewell, Elizabeth M. (anon.). *Cleve Hall*. 2 vols. London, 1855.

“Shocking Sacrilege in the Smyth Vault.” *The Times* 17 Apr. 1855: 12.

Sidney, Samuel (anon.). “A Fashionable Forger.” *Household Words* 15 Nov. 1851: 178-82.

Sinclair, Catherine. *Cross Purposes*. 3 vols. London, 1855.

“Sir Edward Bulwer Lytton's New Work.” *The Times* 21 Dec. 1846: 3.

“Sir Peter Laurie.” Leading Article. *The Times* 2 Nov. 1859: 8.

“Sketch of Mr. Roupell.” *The Times* 26 Aug. 1862: 4.

“Slaves of the Ring.” *All The Year Round* 3 (1860): 582-85.

"Smith, the Forger of Exchequer-Bills." *The Times* 7 Dec. 1841: 6.

Smith, Henry P. Letter to Edward Bulwer-Lytton. 19 May 1846. Hertfordshire County Records Office, Hertford. DE/K C2/43.

---. Letter to Edward Bulwer-Lytton. 26 May 1846. Hertfordshire County Records Office, Hertford. DE/K C2/42.

---. Letter to Edward Bulwer-Lytton. 2 May 1849. Hertfordshire Country Records Office, Hertford. DE/K C2/41.

"The Smyth Forgery Case." *Law Times* 20 Aug. 1853: 206.

"The Smyth Forgery Case." *The Times* 27 Aug. 1853: 10.

"The Smyth Forgery Case." *The Times* 29 Aug. 1853: 7.

"The Smyth Forgery Case." *The Times* 15 Sept. 1853: 8.

"Smyth v. Smyth." *Spectator*. Rpt. in *The Times* 17 Aug. 1853: 8.

"Smyth v. Smyth." *The Times* 9 Aug. 1853: 9.

"Smyth v. Smyth." *The Times* 11 Aug. 1853: 10.

"Smyth v. Smyth." *The Times* 13 Aug. 1853: 7.

Spence, Catherine Helen. *Clara Morrison: a Tale of South Australia during the Gold Fever*. 2 vols. London, 1854.

St. John, James Augustus. *The Ring and the Veil*. 3 vols. London, 1856.

Stephen, James Fitzjames (anon.). "Circumlocution." *Saturday Review* 6 June 1857: 514-15.

---. (anon.). "The *Edinburgh Review* and Modern Novelists." *Saturday Review* 18 July 1857: 57-58.

---. *A General View of the Criminal Law of England*. London, 1863.

---. *A History of the Criminal Law*. 3 vols. London, 1883.

---. (anon.). "The License of Modern Novelists." *Edinburgh Review* 106 (1857):

124-56.

---. (anon.). "The Relation of Novels to Life." *Cambridge Essays Contributed by*

Members of the University, 1855. Extract rpt. in Eigner and Worth 93-118.

---. "Sentimentalism." *Cornhill Magazine* 10 (1864): 65-75.

Stephen, Leslie. *The Life of Sir James Fitzjames Stephen*. London, 1895.

Stephens, Walter (anon.). *Superior to Adversity; or, The Romance of a Clouded Life*.

2 vols. London, 1864.

"Suicide of Mr. John Sadleir, MP." *The Times* 5 Apr. 1856: 5.

Swinburne, Algernon Charles. *William Blake: A Critical Essay*. London, 1868.

"Swiss Watches." *The Times* 22 Oct. 1844: 6.

Thackeray, William Makepeace. *The Adventures of Philip*. 1862. Ed. George

Saintsbury. London: Oxford UP, 1908.

---. "Barbazure. By G. P. R. Jeames, Esq., Etc." *Novels By Eminent Hands*. 1847.

Burlesques. Works. 47-59.

---. *The History of Pendennis*. 1850. *Works*.

---. "The Lamentable Ballad of the Foundling of Shoreditch." 1850. *Ballads and The*

Rose and the Ring. Works. 277-80.

---. *The Letters and Private Papers of William Makepeace Thackeray*. Ed. Gordon N.

Ray. London: Oxford UP, 1945-46. 4 vols.

---. *The Letters and Private Papers of William Makepeace Thackeray* (supplement).

Ed. Edgar F. Harden. New York: Garland, 1994. 2 vols.

---. "On Half a Loaf – A Letter to Messrs. Broadway, Battery and Co., of New York,

Bankers." 1862. *Roundabout Papers. Works*. 192-200.

---. "On a Pear-Tree." 1862. *Roundabout Papers. Works*. 241-47.

---. *Selected Letters of William Makepeace Thackeray*. Ed. Edgar F. Harden.

Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1996.

---. "A Shabby Genteel Story." 1840. *A Shabby Genteel Story and Other Writings*. Ed.

D. J. Taylor. London: Dent, 1993. 15-109.

---. *Vanity Fair*. 1847. *Works*.

---. *The Works of William Makepeace Thackeray*. London, 1869-98. 26 vols.

Thesiger, Frederick. *Smyth versus Smyth*. London, 1869.

Thomas, H. *John Sadleir, or the Ruined Speculator*. Melbourne, 1856.

"Thomas Powell." *Cyclopedia of American Biography*. Ed. James Grant Wilson and

John Fiske. New York, 1887-89. 6 vols. 23 Jan. 2003

<<http://www.famousamericans.net/thomaspowell/>>.

Thornbury, Walter. *Old Stories Re-told*. London, 1870.

Thorp, Elise. *Come of Her Vow*. London, 1874.

"The Tichborne Case." *Punch* 61 (1871): 9, 23.

"Tichborne v. Lushington." *Punch* 62 (1872): 47.

Tichborne v. Lushington, and Others. In Chancery. London, 1867-72. 4 vols.

The Tichborne Trial: the Evidence of Handwriting, Comprising Autograph Letters of Roger Tichborne, Arthur Orton, and the Defendant in fac-simile. London, 1874.

"To the Tichborne Jury." *Punch* 64 (1873): 172.

Townsend, William Charles. *Modern State Trials*. Vol. 1. London, 1850. 2 vols.

Tracey, Benjamin Wheatley. *The Tracy Peerage Case of Benjamin Wheatley Tracey, esquire, a lieutenant of her majesty's Royal Navy, claiming titles, honors, and dignities of Viscount and baron Tracy, of Rathcoole, in the Kingdom of Ireland, with petition to her majesty, and observations thereon*. London, 1853.

Tracy, Charles L. Letter. *The Times* 17 Feb. 1858: 5.

"The Tracy Peerage." *The Times* 16 June 1847: 7.

"The Tracy Peerage." *The Times* 4 Aug. 1848: 7.

"The Tracy Peerage." *The Times* 8 Aug. 1854: 9.

Thomas, William Moy (anon.). "Transported for Life." *Household Words* 13 July 1852: 455-64, 7 Aug. 1852: 482-89.

Tracy Peerage 10 *Clark and Finnelly* 154, 8 *ER* 700 [1839-1843]

Trafford, F. G. [i.e. Charlotte Riddell]. *George Geith of Fen Court*. 3 vols. London, 1864.

---. *Maxwell Drewitt*. 3 vols. London, 1865.

"A Triad of Novels." *Fraser's Magazine* 42 (1850): 574-90.

"A Trial of a Most Extraordinary Character." *Household Narrative* Aug. 1853: 183-84.

"The Trial of Richard Hugh Smyth, alias 'Tom Provis.'" *Household Narrative* Apr. 1859: 87.

Trollope, Anthony. *An Autobiography*. 1883. Ed. David Skilton. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1996.

---. *Barchester Towers*. 1859. Ed. Robin Gilmair. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1983.

---. *The Bertrams*. 1859. Ed. Geoffrey Harvey. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1991.

---. *Doctor Thorne*. 1858. Ed. Ruth Rendell. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1991.

---. *The Kellys and the O'Kellys*. 1848. Ed. W. J. McCormack with an Introduction by William Trevor. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1982.

---. *Is He Popenjoy?* 1878. Ed. John Sutherland. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1986.

---. *Orley Farm*. 1862. Ed. David Skilton. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1985.

---. *Phineas Redux*. 1874. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1952.

---. *The Prime Minister*. 1876. Ed. Jennifer Uglow with an Introduction by John

McCormick. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1999.

---. *Sir Harry Hotspur of Humblethwaite*. 1870. London: Williams, 1948.

---. *The Way We Live Now*. 1875. Ed. John Sutherland. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1982.

"The Uses of Fiction." *Saturday Review* 15 Sept. 1866: 323-24.

"Very Singular Things in the City." *All the Year Round* 3 (1860): 325-26.

Wainewright, Thomas Griffiths. "C. Van Vinkbooms his Dogmas for Dilettanti. – No.

II." 1821. Rpt. in Hazlitt, *Essays* 189-208.

---. "Exhibition of the Royal Academy." 1821. Rpt. in Hazlitt, *Essays* 135-64.

Warren, Samuel (anon.). Rev. of *Modern State Trials*, by W. C. Townsend.

Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine 59 (1851): 461-88.

---. *Ten-Thousand-A-Year*. 1841. Edinburgh, 1845. 3 vols.

---. *Ten-Thousand-A-Year*. 1841. New York: Burt, n.d.

"The Watch Trade." *The Times* 17 Nov. 1845: 5.

Wilde, Oscar. "The Decay of Lying." 1889. *Intentions*. London, 1891. 1-55.

---. "Pen, Pencil, and Poison: A Study in Green." 1889. *Intentions*. London, 1891. 59-

91.

Wills, W. H. (anon.). "Chips: Destruction of Parish Registers." *Household Words* 6

July 1850: 351.

---. "The Doom of English Wills: Cathedral Number Three." *Household Words* 2

Nov. 1850: 125-28.

---. "Two Chapters on Banknote Forgeries: I." *Household Words* 7 Sept. 1850: 555-

60.

Wills, W. H., and Charles Dickens (anon.). "The Doom of English Wills: Cathedral

Number One." *Household Words* 28 Sept. 1850: 1-4.

---. (anon.). "The Doom of English Wills: Cathedral Number Two." *Household Words*

5 Oct. 1850: 25-29.

---. (anon.). "Two Chapters on Banknote Forgeries: II." *Household Words* 21 Sept.

1850: 615-20.

Wilson, William (anon.). *Andrew Ramsay of Errol*. 3 vols. London, 1865.

Wood, Charles W. *Memorials of Mrs. Henry Wood*. London, 1894.

Wood, Ellen. *Danesbury House*. London, 1860.

---. *Elster's Folly*. 1866. London: Macmillan, 1908.

---. *Oswald Cray*. 1864. London: Macmillan, 1901.

---. *The Story of Charles Strange*. 1888. London, 1897.

---. *Within the Maze*. 1872. London: Macmillan, 1910.

Wood, Emma Carolina [i.e. Lady Wood]. *On Credit*. 2 vols. London, 1870.

Woodall, William Otter, ed. *A Collection of Reports of Celebrated Trials, Civil and Criminal*. Vol. 1. London, 1873. 2 vols.

Wraxall, Sir Frederick Charles Lascelles. *Criminal Celebrities*. London, 1861.

Wynter, Andrew (anon.). "The Police and Thieves." *Quarterly Review* 99 (1856): 160-200.

Yates, Edmund. *Running the Gauntlet*. 3 vols. London, 1865.

---. *Land At Last*. 3 vols. London, 1866.

Secondary

Ackland, Michael. "Henry Savery." *Australian Literature*, 1788-1914. Ed. Selina

Samuels. *Dictionary of Literary Biography*. Vol. 230. Farmington Hills, MI: Gale, 2001.

- Ackroyd, Peter. *Dickens*. London: Sinclair-Stevenson, 1990.
- d'Albertis, Deidre. *Disassembling Fictions: Elizabeth Gaskell and the Victorian Social Context*. New York: St Martin's, 1997.
- Altick, Richard D. *The English Common Reader: A Social History of the Mass Reading Public, 1800-1900*. 1957. Columbus: Ohio State UP, 1998.
- . *Evil Encounters*. London: John Murray, 1986.
- . *The Presence of the Present: Topics of the Day in the Victorian Novel*. Columbus: Ohio State UP, 1991.
- . *Victorian Studies in Scarlet*. New York: Norton, 1970.
- Anderson, Amanda. *Tainted Souls and Painted Faces: The Rhetoric of Fallenness in Victorian Culture*. Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1993.
- Argyle, Barry. *An Introduction to the Australian Novel, 1830-1930*. Oxford: Clarendon, 1972.
- Aristodemou, Maria. *Law and Literature: Journeys From Her to Eternity*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2000.
- Armstrong, Nancy. *Desire and Domestic Fiction: A Political History of the Novel*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1987.
- Ashton, Rosemary. *G. H. Lewes: A Life*. Oxford: Clarendon, 1991.
- Baines, Paul. *The House of Forgery in Eighteenth-Century Britain*. Aldershot: Ashgate, 1999.
- Baker, William. *Wilkie Collins's Library: A Reconstruction*. Westport, Conn.: Greenwood, 2002.
- Baumgarten, Murray. "Calligraphy and Code: Writing in *Great Expectations*," *Dickens Studies Annual* 11 (1983): 61-72.
- . "Writing and *David Copperfield*." *Dickens Studies Annual* 14 (1985): 39-59.

- Barker, Ernest A. Introduction. *Whitefriars*, by Emma Robinson. London: Routledge, 1904. v-vii.
- Bender, John. *Imagining the Penitentiary: Fiction and the Architecture of Mind in Eighteenth-Century England*. Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1987.
- Bennett, Bruce, et al. *The Penguin New Literary History of Australia/Australian Literary Studies Special Issue 3: 4* (1988). Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1988.
- Bentley, David. *English Criminal Justice in the Nineteenth Century*. London: Hambledon, 1998.
- Bentley, Nicholas, et al., ed., *The Dickens Index*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1988.
- Bernstein, Stephen. "Reading Blackwater Park: Gothicism, Narrative, and Ideology in *The Woman in White*." *Studies in the Novel* 25: 3 (1993): 291-305.
- Bidwell, Austin. Ed. George Dilnot. *The Bank of England Forgery*. London: Bles, 1929.
- Billington, Josie. *Faithful Realism: Elizabeth Gaskell and Leo Tolstoy*. Lewisburg: Bucknell UP, 2002.
- Birker, William J. "Thackeray's Medical Fathers." *Victorians Institute Journal* 21 (1993): 71-86.
- Blain, Virginia et al., ed., *The Feminist Companion to Literature in English: Women Writers from the Middle Ages to the Present*. London: Batsford, 1990.
- Blake, Andrew. *Reading Victorian Fiction*. Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1989.
- Bloom, Harold. *The Anxiety of Influence: a Theory of Poetry*. New York: Oxford UP, 1973.
- Boone, Mario. *Bradbury, Wilson and Co.: A Company History*. 7 Nov. 2003 <<http://booneshares.com/WE.html>>.

- Booth, Bradford A. "Trollope and *Little Dorrit*." *Trollopian* 2: 4 (1948): 237-40.
- Botting, Fred. *Gothic*. London: Routledge, 1996.
- Bowen, Elizabeth. Introduction. *Uncle Silas*, by Sheridan Le Fanu. London: Cresset, 1947. 7-23.
- Boyle, Thomas. *Black Swine in the Sewers of Hampstead: Beneath the Surface of Victorian Sensationalism*. London: Hodder, 1990.
- . "‘Fishy Extremities’: Subversion of Orthodoxy in the Victorian Sensation Novel." *Literature and History* 9: 1(1983): 92-96.
- Brake, Laurel. "Writing, Cultural Production, and the Periodical Press in the Nineteenth Century." *Writing and Victorianism*. Ed. J. B. Bullen. London: Longman, 1997. 54-72.
- Brantlinger, Patrick. *The Reading Lesson: The Threat of Mass Literacy in Nineteenth-Century British Fiction*. Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1998.
- . "What is ‘Sensational’ about the ‘Sensation Novel’?" *Nineteenth-Century Fiction* 37: 1 (1982): 1-28.
- Briefel, Julia Aviva. "Counterproductions: Gender and Authenticity in Nineteenth-Century Narrative." Ph.D. Diss. Harvard U, 2000.
- Brightfield, Myron F. "America and the Americans, 1840-60, as Depicted in English Novels of the Period." *American Literature* 31: 3 (1959): 309-24.
- Brooks, Peter. *Reading for the Plot: Design and Intention in Narrative*. 1984. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard UP, 1992.
- . "Repetition, Repression, and Return: The Plotting of *Great Expectations*. *Great Expectations*, by Charles Dickens. Ed. Janice Carlisle. Boston: Bedford-St. Martin's, 1996. 481-501.
- Brown, Julia Prewitt. *Cosmopolitan Criticism: Oscar Wilde's Philosophy of Art*.

Charlottesville, Virginia: UP of Virginia, 1997.

Brown, Monika. "Dutch Painters and British Novel-Readers: *Adam Bede* in the Context of Victorian Cultural Literacy." *Victorians Institute Journal* 18 (1990): 113-133.

Browne, Nelson. *Sheridan Le Fanu*. London: Arthur Baker, 1951.

Burke, Richard C. "Accommodation and Transcendence: Last Wills in Trollope's Novels." *Dickens Studies Annual* 15 (1986): 291-307.

Burns, Wayne. "Charles Reade and the Collinses." *Modern Language Notes* 62: 6 (1947): 397-99.

---. *Charles Reade: A Study in Victorian Authorship*. New York, Bookman Associates, 1961.

Burrow, J. W. "Faith, Doubt, and Unbelief." *The Victorians*. Ed. Laurence Lerner. New York: Holmes, 1978. 153-73.

Butler, Lance St. John. *Victorian Doubt: Literary and Cultural Discourses*. New York: Harvester-Wheatsheaf, 1990.

Butt, John, and Kathleen Tillotson. *Dickens at Work*. London: Methuen, 1957.

Cairns, David J. A. *Advocacy and the Making of the Adversarial Criminal Trial 1800-1865*. Oxford: Clarendon P, 1998.

Campbell, James L. *Edward Bulwer-Lytton*. Boston: Twayne, 1986.

Carlisle, Janice M. "Little Dorrit: Necessary Fictions." *Studies in the Novel* 7: 2 (1975): 195-214.

Carnell, Jennifer. *The Literary Lives of Mary Elizabeth Braddon: A Study of Her Life and Work*. Hastings: Sensation Press, 2000.

Casey, Ellen Miller. "'Other People's Prudery': Mary Elizabeth Braddon." *Tennessee Studies in Literature* 27 (1984): 72-82.

- de Chantilly, Marc Vaulbert. "*Wainewright the Poisoner: An Example of Andrew Motion's 'High Scholarship.'*" London: Vanity, 2000.
- Chapple, John. *Elizabeth Gaskell: The Early Years*. Manchester: Manchester UP, 1997.
- Childers, Joseph W. *Novel Possibilities: Fiction and the Formation of Early Victorian Culture*. Philadelphia: U of Pennsylvania, 1995.
- Christensen, Allan Conrad. *Edward Bulwer-Lytton: The Fiction of New Regions*. Athens: U of Georgia P, 1976.
- Clarke, Micael M. *Thackeray and Women*. DeKalb: Northern Illinois UP, 1995.
- Coady, C. A. J. *Testimony: A Philosophical Study*. Oxford: Clarendon, 1992.
- Cohen, William A. *Sex Scandal: The Private Parts of Victorian Fiction*. Durham: Duke UP, 1996.
- Coleman, Charles. *Charles Reade, As I Knew Him*. London: Treherne, 1903.
- Collins, John (and Nicholas Barker). *The Two Forgers: A Biography of Harry Buxton Forman and Thomas James Wise*. Aldershot: Scolar, 1992.
- Collins, Philip. *Dickens and Crime*. London: Macmillan, 1962.
- . Rev. of *The Charles Dickens-Thomas Powell Vendetta*, ed. by Sidney P. Moss and Carolyn J. Moss. *Dickensian* 93: 441 (1997): 209-11.
- Connor, Steven. "Transcripts: Law, Literature, and the Trials of the Voice." *New Formations* 32 (1997): 60-76.
- Craig, Randall. *Promising Language: Betrothal in Victorian Law and Fiction*. Albany: State U of New York P, 2000.
- Cunningham, Valentine. *Everywhere Spoken Against: Dissent in the Victorian Novel*. Oxford: Clarendon, 1975.
- Curling, Jonathan. *Janus Weathercock: The Life of Thomas Griffiths Wainewright*

1794-1847. London: Nelson, 1938.

Cvetkovich, Ann. "Ghostlier Determinations: The Economy of Sensation and *The Woman in White*." *Novel* 23: 1 (1989): 24-43.

---. *Mixed Feelings: Feminism, Mass Culture, and Victorian Sensationalism*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers UP, 1992.

Dahl, Christopher. C. "Fitzjames Stephen, Charles Dickens, and Double Reviewing." *Victorian Periodicals Review* 14: 2 (1981): 51-58.

Daly, Nicholas. "Railway Novels: Sensation Fiction and the Modernization of the Senses." *English Literary History* 66: 2 (1999): 461-87.

Danson, Lawrence. *Wilde's Intentions: The Artist in His Criticism*. Oxford: Clarendon, 1997.

Davis, Glenda Manning. "'On Art in Fiction': A Study of Bulwer-Lytton's Theory in Practice." Ph.D. Diss. Howard U, 1985.

Davis, Lloyd. "Journalism and Victorian Fiction." *Victorian Journalism: Exotic and Domestic*. Ed. Barbara Garlick and Margaret Harris. St Lucia: Queensland UP, 1998. 197-211.

Deal, Nancy Beth. "The Lady as Criminal: Anthony Trollope's Adaptation of the Victorian Sensation Novel." Ph.D. Diss. Michigan State U, 1988.

Deane, Bradley. *The Making of the Victorian Novelist: Anxieties of Authorship in the Mass Market*. New York: Routledge, 2003.

"Death of Marat." 8 Aug. 2003

<<http://www.unet.univie.ac.at/~a9200097/history/jpm2.html>>.

Deeson, A. F. L. *Great Swindlers*. Slough: Foulsham, 1971.

Delany, Paul. "Land, Money, and the Jews in the Later Trollope." *Studies in English Literature* 32: 4 (1992): 765-87.

Dictionary of National Biography. CD-ROM. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1995.

Dodd, Jeff, and Brian Heckel. "Women of Mystery." *University of Louisville*

Magazine Spr. 2002. 21 Jan. 2003

<<http://www.louisville.edu/ur/ucomm/mags/Spring2002/mystery.html>>.

Dolin, Kieran. *Fiction and the Law: Legal Discourse in Victorian and Modernist*

Fiction. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1999.

Dolin, Tim. *Mistress of the House: Women of Property in the Victorian Novel*.

Aldershot: Ashgate, 1997.

Drinker, Henry Sandwith. "The Lawyers of Anthony Trollope." *Two Addresses*

Delivered to Members of the Grolier Club. Ed. Willard Thorp. New York:

Haarlem, 1950. 25-47.

Duncan, Ian. *Modern Romance and Transformations of the Novel: the Gothic, Scott,*

Dickens. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1992.

Dunn, Albert A. "Time and Design in *David Copperfield*." *English Studies* 59 (1978):

225-36.

Dunlop, C. R. B. "Samuel Warren: A Victorian Law and Literature Practitioner."

Cardozo Studies in Law 12: 2 (2000): 265-91.

Durey, Jill Felicity. *Trollope and the Church of England*. Basingstoke: Palgrave,

2002.

Eagleton, Terry. *Literary Theory: An Introduction*. 2nd ed. Oxford: Blackwell, 1996.

Easson, Angus, ed. *Elizabeth Gaskell: The Critical Heritage*. London: Routledge,

1991.

Edwards, P. D. *Anthony Trollope: His Art and Scope*. St. Lucia: U of Queensland P,

1978.

---. "Trollope Changes His Mind: The Death of Melmotte in *The Way We Live Now*."

Nineteenth-Century Literature 18: 1 (1963): 89-91.

Eigner, Edwin M. "Dogmatism and Puppyism: The Novelist, The Reviewer, and the Serious Subject: The Case of *Little Dorrit*." *Dickens Studies Annual* 22 (1993): 217-37.

---. *The Metaphysical Novel in England and America: Dickens, Bulwer, Melville, and Hawthorne*. Berkeley: U of California P, 1978.

---. "Raphael in Oxford Street: Bulwer's Accommodation to the Realists." *The Nineteenth-Century Writer and His Audience: Selected Problems in Theory, Form, and Content*. Ed. Harold Orel and George J. Worth. Lawrence: U of Kansas Humanistic Studies P, 1969. 61-74.

Edwin M. Eigner and George J. Worth, ed. *Victorian Criticism of the Novel*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1985.

---. "Introductory Essay." Eigner and Worth 1-21.

Elam, Diane. "White Narratology: Gender and Reference in Wilkie Collins's *The Woman in White*." *Virginal Sexuality and Textuality in Victorian Literature*. Ed. Lloyd Davis. Albany: State U of New York P, 1993. 49-63.

Ellis, Paul. "Radical Myths: Eliza Keary's *Little Seal-Skin and Other Poems* (1874)." *Victorian Poetry* 40: 4 (2002): 387-408.

---. Rev. of *The Forger's Shadow*, by Nick Groom. *Times Literary Supplement* 26 Apr. 2002: 36.

Ellis, Stewart Marsh. *The Solitary Horseman; or, the Life and Adventures of G. P. R. James*. London: Cayme, 1927.

---. *Wilkie Collins, Le Fanu, and Others*. London: Constable, 1931.

Elwin, Malcolm. *Charles Reade: A Biography*. London: Jonathan Cape, 1931.

Emsley, Clive. *Crime and Society in England, 1750-1900*. 2nd ed. London: Longman,

1996.

Escott, Thomas Hay Sweet. *Anthony Trollope, His Work, His Associates, and Literary Originals*. London: John Lane, 1913.

Ezard, John. "Fact Vies With Fiction in Pursuit of the Classic English Poisoner." *Guardian* 26 Feb. 2000: 3.

Fahnestock, Jeanne. "Bigamy: The Rise and Fall of a Convention." *Nineteenth-Century Fiction* 36: 1 (1981): 47-71.

Ferguson, Niall. *The Cash Nexus: Money and Power in the Modern World, 1700-2000*. London: Penguin, 2002.

Ferris, Ina. "Narrative Strategy in Thackeray's *The Adventures of Philip*." *English Studies in Canada* 5: 4 (1979): 448-56.

Filmer, Kath. "The Specter of the Self in *Frankenstein* and *Great Expectations*." *The Haunted Mind: The Supernatural in Victorian Literature*, Ed. Elton E. Smith and Roberts Haas. Lanham: Scarecrow. 19-30.

Fisher, Judith L. *Thackeray's Skeptical Narrative and the "Perilous Trade" of Authorship*. Aldershot: Ashgate, 2002.

Fisichelli, Glynn-Ellen. "The Language of Law and Love: Anthony Trollope's *Orley Farm*." *English Literary History* 61: 3 (1994): 635-53.

Flint, Kate. *Elizabeth Gaskell*. Plymouth: Northcote House, 1995.

---. "The Victorian Novel and its Readers." *The Cambridge Companion to the Victorian Novel*. Ed. Deirdre David. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2001. 17-36.

---. *The Woman Reader, 1837-1914*. Oxford: Clarendon, 1993.

Foucault, Michel. *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*. Trans. Alan Sheridan. 1977. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1991.

Foster, Shirley. *Elizabeth Gaskell: A Literary Life*. Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2002.

Francis, John Collins. "William Roupell." *Notes and Queries* 2: n.s. 2: 1 Oct. 1910: 271-72.

Friedman, Stanley. "The Complex Origins of Pip and Magwitch." *Dickens Studies Annual* 15 (1986): 221-31.

---. "Heep and Powell: Dickensian Revenge?" *Dickensian* 90: 432 (1994): 36-43.

Furst, Lilian R. "Realism and its 'Code of Accreditation.'" *Comparative Literature Studies* 25: 2 (1988): 101-26.

Gagnier, Regenia. *Idylls of the Marketplace: Oscar Wilde and the Victorian Public*. Aldershot: Scolar, 1986.

Gallagher, Catherine. *The Industrial Reformation of English Fiction: Social Discourse and Narrative Form 1832-67*. Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1985.

Gaskell, Philip. *A New Introduction to Bibliography*. 1972. Oxford: Clarendon, 1985.

Gatrell, V. A. C. *The Hanging Tree: Execution and the English People 1770-1868*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1994.

Gatrell, V. A. C., and T. B. Hadden. "Criminal Statistics and Their Interpretation." *Nineteenth-Century Society*. Ed. E. A. Wrigley. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1972. 336-96.

Gilbert, Michael. *The Claimant*. London: Constable, 1957.

Gilbert, Pamela K. *Disease, Desire, and the Body in Women's Popular Novels*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1997.

Gilead, Sarah. "Barmecide Feasts: Ritual, Narrative, and the Victorian Novel." *Dickens Studies Annual* 17 (1988): 225-47.

Gillespie, M. P. *Oscar Wilde and the Poetics of Ambiguity*. Florida: UP of Florida, 1996.

Ginsburg, Michel Peled. "Dickens and the Uncanny: Repression and Displacement in

- Great Expectations.*” *Dickens Studies Annual* 13 (1984): 115-24.
- Glendinning, Victoria. *Trollope*. London: Pimlico, 1993.
- Goldberg, Michael. “From Bentham To Carlyle: Dickens’ Political Development.”
Journal of the History of Ideas 33: 1 (1972): 61-76.
- Gomme, A. H. *Dickens*. London: Evans, 1971. 174-76. Rpt. in *David Copperfield*.
Ed. Harold Bloom. New York: Chelsea House, 1992. 28-29.
- Goodrich, Peter. *Law in the Courts of Love: Literature and Other Minor
Jurisprudences*. London: Routledge, 1996.
- Grafton, Anthony. *Forgers and Critics: Creativity and Duplicity in Western
Scholarship*. London: Collins, 1990.
- Groom, Nick. *The Forger’s Shadow: How Forgery Changed the Course of Literature*.
Basingstoke: Picador, 2002.
- Grossman, Jonathan H. *The Art of Alibi: English Law Courts and the Novel*.
Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins UP, 2002.
- Guy, Josephine M. *The Victorian Social-Problem Novel: The Market, the Individual
and the Commercial Life*. London: Macmillan, 1996.
- Hack, Daniel Seth. “The Material Interests of the Victorian Writer (Charles Dickens,
William Makepeace Thackeray, Thomas Carlyle, Wilkie Collins).” Ph.D.
Diss. U of California, Berkeley, 1998.
- Hadgraft, Cecil H. Biographical Introduction. *The Hermit in Van Diemen’s Land*, by
Henry Savery. Melbourne: U of Queensland P, 1964. 15-42.
- . Biographical Introduction. *Quintus Servinton*, by Henry Savery. Brisbane:
Jacaranda, 1962. ix-xxx.
- Haefner, Joel Edgar. “The Shape of the English Romantic Essay and the Spirit of the
Age: Hazlitt, Lamb, and the *London Magazine*.” Ph.D. Diss. U of Iowa, 1984.

- Halperin, John. *Trollope and Politics*. London: Macmillan, 1977.
- Hamer, Mary. *Writing By Numbers: Trollope's Serial Fiction*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1987.
- Hara, Eiichi. "Stories Present and Absent in *Great Expectations*." *English Literary History* 53: 3 (1986): 593-614.
- Harden, Edgar F. *Thackeray the Writer: From Journalism to "Vanity Fair."* London: Macmillan, 1998.
- Harris, Michael, and Robin Myers, ed. *Fakes and Frauds: Varieties of Deception in Print and Manuscript*. Winchester: St. Paul's Bibliographies, 1989.
- Hartman, Mary S. *Victorian Murderesses: A True Story of Thirteen Respectable French and English Women Accused of Unspeakable Crimes*. New York: Schocken, 1976.
- Harvey, Geoffrey. *The Art of Anthony Trollope*. London: Weidenfield, 1980.
- Hatano, Yoko. "Evangelicalism in *Ruth*." *Modern Language Review* 95: 3 (2000): 634-41.
- Hayford, Harrison, et al. ed. *Moby-Dick, or The Whale*. Vol. 6 of *The Writings of Herman Melville*. Evanstone: Northwestern UP, 1988.
- Haynie, Aeron. "'An idle handle that was never turned, and a lazy rope so rotten': The Decay of the Country Estate in *Lady Audley's Secret*." Tromp et al. 63-74.
- Haywood, Ian. *Faking It: Art and the Politics of Forgery*. New York: St. Martin's, 1987.
- . *The Making of History: A Study of the Literary Forgeries of James Macpherson and Thomas Chatterton in Relation to Eighteenth-Century Ideas of History and Fiction*. Rutherford: Fairleigh Dickinson UP, 1986.

- Helfield, Randa. "Poisonous Plots: Women Sensation Novelists and Murderesses of the Victorian Period." *Victorian Review* 21: 2 (1995): 161-88.
- Henriques, U. R. Q. "Bastardy and the New Poor Law." *Past and Present* 37 (1967): 103-29.
- Herbert, Christopher. "Trollope and the Fixity of the Self." *Publications of the Modern Languages Association of America* 93: 2 (1978): 228-39.
- Hertz, Bertha Keveson. "Trollope's Racial Bias Against Disraeli." *Midwest Quarterly* 22: 4 (1981): 374-91.
- Hirst, John. "The Australian Experience: The Convict Colony." Morris and Rothman 235-65.
- Hobsbaum, E. J. *Industry and Empire*. 1968. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1990.
- Holdsworth, William S. *Charles Dickens as a Legal Historian*. 1928. New York: Haskell House, 1972.
- Hollingsworth, Keith. *The Newgate Novel*. Detroit: Wayne State UP, 1963.
- Hoppen, K. Theodore. *The Mid-Victorian Generation 1846-1886*. Oxford: Clarendon, 1998.
- . "Roads to Democracy: Electioneering and Corruption in Nineteenth-Century England and Ireland." *History* 81: 264 (1996): 553-71.
- Hughes, Noel. "The Tichbornes, The Doughtys and Douglas Woodruff." *Recusant History* 23: 4 (1997): 602-21.
- Hughes, Winifred. *The Maniac in the Cellar: Sensation Novels of the 1860s*. New Jersey: Princeton UP, 1980.
- . "The Sensation Novel." *A Companion to the Victorian Novel*. Ed. Patrick Brantlinger and William B. Thesing. Oxford: Blackwell, 2002. 260-78.
- Hunt, Bishop Carleton. *Development of the Business Corporation in England, 1800-*

67. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard UP, 1936.

Ingram, Peter. "Victorian Values: Law and Justice in the Novels of Trollope." *Tall Stories? Reading Law and Literature*. Ed. John Morrison and Christine Bell. Aldershot: Dartmouth, 1996. 223-43.

Ittmann, Karl. *Work, Gender and Family in Victorian England*. London: Macmillan, 1995.

Jaffe, Audrey. *Scenes of Sympathy: Identity and Representation in Victorian Fiction*. Ithaca: Cornell UP, 2000.

James, Harold. "The Literary Financier." *The American Scholar* 60: 2 (1991): 251-57.

John, Juliet. *Dickens's Villains: Melodrama, Character, Popular Culture*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2001.

---. "Twisting the Newgate Tale: Dickens, Popular Culture and the Politics of Genre." *Rethinking Victorian Culture*. Ed. Juliet John and Alice Jenkins. London: Macmillan, 2000. 126-45.

Jordan, John O. "The Social Sub-Text of *David Copperfield*." *Dickens Studies Annual* 14 (1985): 61-92.

Kahan, Jeffrey. *Reforging Shakespeare: The Story of a Theatrical Scandal*. Bethlehem: Lehigh UP, 1998.

Keesing, Nancy. *John Lang and "The Forger's Wife": a True Tale of Early Australia*. Sydney: John Ferguson, 1979.

Kellogg, David. "'My Most Unwilling Hand: The Mixed Motivations of *David Copperfield*.'" *Dickens Studies Annual* 20 (1991): 57-73.

Kendrick, Walter M. "The Sensationalism of *The Woman in White*." *Nineteenth-Century Fiction* 32: 1 (1977): 18-35.

Kent, Christopher. "Probability, Reality and Sensation in the Novels of Wilkie

- Collins." *Dickens Studies Annual* 20 (1991): 259-80.
- Kilgour, Maggie. *The Rise of the Gothic Novel*. London: Routledge, 1995.
- Kincaid, James R. *The Novels of Anthony Trollope*. Oxford: Clarendon, 1977.
- King, Hazel. Rev. of *John Lang and "The Forger's Wife,"* by Nancy Keesing. *Royal Australian Historical Society Journal* 67: 2 (1981): 178.
- King, Margaret F. and Elliot Engel. "The Emerging Carlylean Hero in Bulwer's Novels of the 1830s." *Nineteenth-Century Fiction* 36: 3 (1981): 277-95.
- Koffler, Judith. "The Assimilation of Law and Literature: An Approach to Metanoia." *Legal Studies Forum* 1978: 5-11. 3 Oct. 2002
<<http://www.law.utexas.edu/1pop/etext/1sf/koffler3.html>>.
- Kohl, Norbert. *Oscar Wilde: The Works of a Conformist Rebel*. Trans. David Henry Wilson. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1989.
- Korobkin, Laura Hanft. "Silent Woman, Speaking Fiction: Charles Reade's *Griffith Gaunt* (1866) at the Adultery Trial of Henry Ward Beecher." *The New Nineteenth Century: Feminist Readings of Underread Victorian Fiction*. Ed. Barbara Leah Harman and Susan Meyer. New York: Garland, 1996. 45-62.
- Kucich, John. *The Power of Lies: Transgression in Victorian Fiction*. Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1994.
- . "Transgression in Trollope: Dishonesty and the Antibourgeois Elite." *English Literary History* 56: 3 (1989): 593-618.
- Krueger, Christine L. "Literary Defenses and Medical Prosecutions: Representing Infanticide in Nineteenth-Century Britain." *Victorian Studies* 40: 2 (1997): 271-94.
- Landes, David S. *Revolution in Time: Clocks and the Making of the Modern World*. Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap-Harvard UP, 1983.

- Langland, Elizabeth. "Enclosure Acts: Framing Women's Bodies in *Lady Audley's Secret*." Tromp et al. 3-16.
- Lansbury, Coral. *The Reasonable Man: Trollope's Legal Fiction*. New Jersey: Princeton UP, 1981.
- Laurie, Peter George. *Sir Peter Laurie, a Family Memoir*. Brentwood, 1901.
- Law, Graham. *Serialising Fiction in the Victorian Press*. Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2001.
- Leckie, Barbara. *Culture and Adultery: The Novel, the Newspaper, and the Law, 1857-1914*. Philadelphia: U of Pennsylvania P, 1999.
- Lester, V. Markham. *Victorian Insolvency: Bankruptcy, Imprisonment for Debt, and Company Winding-Up in Nineteenth-Century England*. Oxford: Clarendon, 1995.
- Levine, George. *Dying to Know: Scientific Epistemology and Narrative in Victorian England*. Chicago: U of Chicago P, 2002.
- . *The Realistic Imagination: English Fiction From Frankenstein to Lady Chatterley*. Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1981.
- Litvack, Leon. "Dickens, Australia, and Magwitch, Part II: The Search for *le cas Magwitch*." *Dickensian* 95: 448 (1999): 101-27.
- Lloyd, Tom. *Crises of Realism: Representing Experience in the British Novel 1816-1910*. Lewisburg: Bucknell UP, 1997.
- Loesberg, Jonathan. "The Ideology of Narrative Form in Sensation Fiction." *Representations* 13: 1 (1986): 115-38.
- Logan, Deborah Anna. *Fallenness in Victorian Women's Writing*. Columbia: U of Missouri P, 1998.
- Loncar, Kathleen. *Legal Fiction: Law in the Novels of Nineteenth-Century Women*

Novelists. London: Minerva, 1995.

Lonoff, Sue. "Charles Dickens and Wilkie Collins." *Nineteenth-Century Fiction* 35: 2 (1980): 150-70.

Lund, Michael. "Clocking the Reader in the Long Victorian Novel." *Victorian Newsletter* 59 (1981): 22-25.

---. "Novels, Writers, and Readers in 1850." *Victorian Periodicals Review* 17: 1-2 (1984): 15-28.

Lund, Roger D. "Genteel Fictions: Caricature and Satirical Design in *Little Dorrit*." *Dickens Studies Annual* 10 (1982): 45-66.

Lytton, Victor Alexander George Robert, 2nd Earl of Lytton, *The Life of Edward Bulwer, First Lord Lytton*. London: Macmillan, 1913. 2 vols.

MacDonagh, Gwendolyn, and Jonathan P. Smith. "'Fill Up All the Gaps': Narrative and Illegitimacy in *The Woman in White*." *Journal of Narrative Technique* 26: 3 (1996): 274-91.

MacDonald, Susan Peck. *Anthony Trollope*. Boston, Mass.: Twayne, 1987.

Maceachen, Dougald B. "Wilkie Collins and British Law." *Nineteenth-Century Fiction* 5: 2 (1950): 121-39.

MacGowan, Douglas. *Murder in Victorian Scotland: the Trial of Madeleine Smith*. London: Praeger, 1999.

MacKay, Carol Hanbery. "Surrealization and the Redoubled Self: Fantasy in *David Copperfield* and *Pendennis*." *Dickens Studies Annual* 14 (1985): 241-65.

Marsh, Joss. *Word Crimes: Blasphemy, Culture, and Literature in Nineteenth-Century England*. Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1998.

Marx, Leo. "Melville's Parable of the Walls." *Sewanee Review* 61: 4 (1953).

Rpt. in *Melville's Short Novels*. Ed. Dan McCall. New York: Norton, 2002.

239-56.

Matus, Jill. L. *Unstable Bodies: Victorian Representations of Sexuality and Maternity*.

Manchester: Manchester UP, 1995.

McConville, Seán. "The Victorian Prison: England, 1865-1965." Morris and Rothman

117-50.

McCormack, W. J. *Dissolute Characters*. Manchester: Manchester UP, 1993.

---. *Sheridan Le Fanu and Victorian Ireland*. Oxford: Clarendon, 1980.

McDonald, Avis. "The Bitter Banishment of *Quintus Sevinton*." *World Literature*

Written in English. 28: 1 (1988): 66-74.

McEvoy, Kieran. "Newspapers and Crime: Narrative and the Construction of

Identity." *Tall Stories? Reading Law and Literature*. Ed. John Morrison and

Christine Bell. Aldershot: Dartmouth, 1996. 179-200.

McGowen, Randall. "From Pillory to Gallows: The Punishment of Forgery in the Age

of the Financial Revolution." *Past and Present* 165 (1999): 107-40.

McMaster, Juliet. *Dickens the Designer*. New Jersey: Barnes and Noble, 1987.

---. "'Funeral Baked Meats': Thackeray's Last Novel." *Studies in the Novel* 13: 1-2

(1981): 133-55.

McMaster, R. D. *Trollope and the Law*. Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1986.

McSweeney, Kerry. "David Copperfield and the Music of Memory." *Dickens Studies*

Annual 23 (1994): 93-119.

McWilliam, Rohan A. "The Tichborne Claimant and the People: Investigations into

Popular Culture, 1867-1886." Ph.D. Diss. Sussex U, 1990.

Meckier, Jerome. "Wilkie Collins's *The Woman in White*: Providence against the

Evils of Propriety." *Journal of British Studies* 22: 1 (1982): 104-26.

Meier, Thomas Keith. *Defoe and the Defense of Commerce*. English Literary Studies

- Monograph ser. 38. British Columbia: Victoria UP, 1987.
- Melada, Ivan. *Sheridan Le Fanu*. Boston, Mass.: Twayne, 1987.
- Melville, Lewis. *William Makepeace Thackeray: a Biography*. London: J. Lane, 1910.
2 vols.
- Mighall, Robert. *A Geography of Victorian Gothic Fiction: Mapping History's Nightmares*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1999.
- Miller, D. A. "Cages aux folles: Sensation and Gender in Wilkie Collins's *The Woman in White*." *Representations* 14 (1986): 107-36.
- . "Secret Subjects, Open Secrets." *Dickens Studies Annual* 14 (1985): 17-38.
- Miller, Edmund Morris. *Australia's First Two Novels: Origins and Backgrounds (Savery's "Quintus Servinton." Grimstone's "Woman's Love")*. Hobart, 1958.
- Miller, J. Hillis. *The Ethics of Reading: Kant, de Man, Eliot, Trollope, James and Benjamin*. New York: Columbia UP, 1987.
- Mills, Sara. *Discourse*. London: Routledge, 1997.
- Mintz, Steven. *A Prison of Expectations: The Family in Victorian Culture*. New York: New York UP, 1983.
- Mitchell, Charlotte. Introduction. *Paul Ferroll*. 1855. By Caroline Clive. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1997. ix-xx.
- Mitchell, Leslie. *Bulwer Lytton: The Rise and Fall of A Victorian Man of Letters*. London: Hambledon, 2003.
- Monsarrat, Ann. *An Uneasy Victorian: Thackeray the Man, 1811-1863*. London: Cassell, 1980.
- Montweiler, Katherine. "Marketing Sensation: *Lady Audley's Secret* and Consumer Culture." *Tromp et al.* 43-61.
- Morgan, E. Victor. *The Theory and Practice of Central Banking 1797-1913*. London:

Frank Cass, 1965.

Morgan, Patrick. "Realism and Documentary: Lowering One's Sights." Bennett et al. 238-52.

Morland, Nigel. *That Nice Miss Smith*. London: Frederick Muller, 1957.

Morris, Norval, and David J. Rothman, ed., *The Oxford History of the Prison: The Practice of Punishment in Western Society*. New York: Oxford UP, 1998.

Moss, Sidney P., and Carolyn J. Moss, ed. *The Charles Dickens-Thomas Powell Vendetta: The Story in Documents*. New York: Whitson, 1996.

Motion, Andrew. *Wainewright the Poisoner*. London: Faber, 2000.

Mullen, Richard, with James Munson. *The Penguin Companion to Trollope*. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1996.

Mundhenk, Rosemary. "David Copperfield and 'the Oppression of Remembrance.'" *Texas Studies in English Literature and Language* 29: 3 (1987): 323-41.

Nayder, Lillian. "Rebellious Sepoys and Bigamous Wives: The Indian Mutiny and Marriage Law Reform." Tromp et al. 31-42.

---. *Unequal Partners: Charles Dickens, Wilkie Collins, and Victorian Authorship*. Ithaca: Cornell UP, 2002.

Nenadic, Stana. "Illegitimacy, Insanity, and Insolvency: Wilkie Collins and the Victorian Nightmares." *The Arts, Literature, and Society*. Ed. Arthur Marwick. London: Routledge, 1990. 133-62.

Newlin, George, ed. *Every Thing in Dickens: Ideas and Subjects Discussed by Charles Dickens in His Complete Works. A Topicon*. Westport. Conn.: Greenwood, 1996.

O'Day, Rosemary. *The Family and Family Relationships, 1500-1900*. London: Macmillan, 1994.

- O'Kell, Robert. "Disraeli's *Coningsby*: Political Manifesto or Psychological Romance?" *Victorian Studies* 23: 1 (1979): 57-78.
- Olsen-Smith, Steven. "Herman Melville's Planned Work on Remorse." *Nineteenth-Century Literature*. 1996: 1-14. 23 Jan. 2003
 <<http://www.ucpress.edu/scan/ncl-free/504/articles/olsen-smith.art504.html>>.
- Page, Norman, ed. *Wilkie Collins: The Critical Heritage*. London: Routledge, 1974.
- Parker, Herschel. *Herman Melville: A Biography*. Vol.1. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 1996. 2 vols.
- Parry, Jonathan. *The Rise and Fall of Liberal Government in Victorian Britain*. London: Yale UP, 1993.
- Partington, Wilfred. "Should a Biographer Tell?: The Story of Dickens's Denunciation of Thomas Powell's Forgeries." *Dickensian* 43: 284 (1947): 193-200, *Dickensian* 44: 285 (1948): 14-23.
- Patterson, Dennis. *Law and Truth*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1996.
- Pearson, Richard. *W. M. Thackeray and the Mediated Text: Writing for Periodicals in the Mid-Nineteenth Century*. Aldershot: Ashgate, 1999.
- Perkin, Joan. *Women and Marriage in Nineteenth-Century England*. London: Routledge, 1989.
- Perkins, Elizabeth. "Colonial Transformations: Writing and the Dilemma of Colonisation." Bennett et al. 139-53.
- . "Literary Culture 1851-1914: Founding a Canon." *The Oxford Literary History of Australia*. Ed. Bruce Bennett et al. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1998. 47-65.
- Peters, Catherine. *Thackeray: A Writer's Life*. Stroud: Sutton, 1999.
- . *Thackeray's Universe: Shifting Worlds of Imagination and Reality*. London: Faber, 1987.

- Peterson, Audrey. *Victorian Masters of Mystery: From Wilkie Collins to Conan Doyle*. New York: Ungar, 1984.
- Philips, David. *Crime and Authority in Victorian England: The Black Country 1835-60*. London: Croom Helm, 1977.
- Philpotts, Trey. "Trevelyan, Treasury, and Circumlocution." *Dickens Studies Annual* 22 (1993): 283-301.
- Polhemus, Robert. M. *The Changing World of Anthony Trollope*. Berkeley: U of California P, 1968.
- Poovey, Mary. "The Man of Letters as Hero: *David Copperfield* and the Professional Writer." *New Casebooks: "David Copperfield" and "Hard Times."* Ed. John Peck. London: Macmillan, 1995. 81-107.
- Pykett, Lyn. *Charles Dickens*. Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2002.
- . *The Improper Feminine: The Woman's Sensation Novel and the New Woman Writing*. London: Routledge, 1992.
- . *The Sensation Novel: From "The Woman in White" to "The Moonstone."* Plymouth: Northcote House, 1994.
- . "Women Writing Women: Nineteenth-Century Representations of Gender and Sexuality." *Women and Literature in Britain, 1800-1900*. Ed. Joanne Shattock. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2001. 78-98.
- Radzinowicz, Sir Leon. *A History of English Criminal Law and its Administration from 1750*. Vol. 4. London: Stevens, 1968. 4 vols.
- Rance, Nicholas. *Wilkie Collins and Other Sensation Novelists: Walking the Moral Hospital*. Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1989.
- Ray, Gordon N. *Thackeray: The Age of Wisdom 1847-1863*. London: Oxford UP, 1958.

- Reed, John R. *Dickens and Thackeray: Punishment and Forgiveness*. Athens: Ohio UP, 1995.
- . "A Friend to Mammon: Speculation in Victorian Literature." *Victorian Studies* 27 (1984): 179-202.
- Retan, Katherine A. "Lower Class Angels in the Middle-Class House: The Domestic Woman's 'Progress' in *Hard Times* and *Ruth*." *Dickens Studies Annual* 23 (1994): 183-204.
- Robb, George. *White-Collar Crime in Modern England: Financial Fraud and Business Morality, 1845-1929*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1992.
- Roberts, Andrew Michael, ed. *Bloomsbury Guides to English Literature: The Novel*. London: Bloomsbury, 1993.
- Roderick, Colin. "John Lang." *Royal Australian Historical Society Journal* 49: 2 (1963): 100-35.
- Robinson, Clement Franklin. "Trollope's Jury Trials." *Nineteenth-Century Fiction* 6: 4 (1952): 247-68.
- Roe, Michael. *Kenealy and the Tichborne Cause: A Study in Mid-Victorian Populism*. Carlton: Melbourne UP, 1974.
- Romney, Jonathan. "Forgery and Economy in Gide's *Les Faux-Monnayeurs*." *Neophilologus* 71: 2 (1987): 196-209.
- Routh, S. J. "The Australian Career of John Lang, Novelist." *Australian Literary Studies* 1: 3 (1964): 206-07.
- Russell, Norman. *The Novelist and Mammon: Literary Responses to the World of Commerce in the Nineteenth Century*. Oxford: Clarendon, 1986.
- Ruthven, K. K. *Faking Literature*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2001.
- Sadleir, Michael. *Collecting Yellowbacks*. London: Constable, 1938.

Sage, Victor. Introduction. *Uncle Silas*, by Sheridan Le Fanu. Ed. Victor Sage.

Harmondsworth: Penguin, 2000. ix-xxxv.

---. "Resurrecting the Regency: Horror and Eighteenth-Century Comedy in Le Fanu's Fiction." *Victorian Gothic*. Ed. Julian Wolfreys. Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2000. 12-30.

Sanders, Andrew. *Anthony Trollope*. Plymouth: Northcote House, 1998.

---. *Authors in Context: Charles Dickens*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2003.

---. *The Short Oxford History of English Literature*. 2nd ed. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2000.

Scheckter, John. *The Australian Novel 1830-1980*. New York: Peter Lang, 1998.

Schlicke, Paul. *Dickens and Popular Entertainment*. London: Allen and Unwin, 1985.

Schor, Hilary M. *Scheherezade in the Marketplace: Elizabeth Gaskell and the Victorian Novel*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1992.

Schramm, Jan-Melissa. "Is Literature More Ethical than Law? Fitzjames Stephen and Literary Responses to the Advent of Full Legal Representation for Felons." *Law and Literature. Current Legal Issues Vol. 2*. Ed. Michael Freeman and Andrew D. E. Lewis. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1999. 417-35.

---. *Testimony and Advocacy in Victorian Law, Literature, and Theology*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2000.

Scull, Andrew. "The Domestication of Madness." *Medical History* 27: 3 (1983): 233-48.

Sears, Albert Carlyle. "Sensational Resistance: A Study of Generic Instability and Value in the Mid-Victorian Novel (Anthony Trollope, Margaret Oliphant, Mary Elizabeth Braddon)." Ph.D. Diss. Lehigh U, 2001.

Sell, Roger D., ed. *Great Expectations*. New Casebooks ser. Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1995.

- Shaw, Harry E. *Narrating Reality: Austen, Scott, Eliot*. Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1999.
- Shell, Marc. *Money, Language and Thought: Literary and Philosophical Economies from the Medieval to the Modern Era*. Berkeley: U of California P, 1982.
- Shelston, Alan. Introduction. *Ruth*. By Elizabeth Gaskell. Ed. Shelston. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1998. vii-xx.
- Sherman, Sandra. *Finance and Fictionality in the Early Eighteenth-Century: Accounting for Defoe*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1996.
- Shillingsburg, Peter L. *Pegasus in Harness: Victorian Publishing and W. M. Thackeray*. Charlottesville: UP of Virginia, 1992.
- Showlater, Elaine. "Family Secrets and Domestic Subversion: Rebellion in the Novels of the 1860s." *The Victorian Family: Structures and Stresses*. Ed. Anthony S. Wohl. London: Croom Helm, 1978. 101-16.
- Shuttleworth, Sally. *George Eliot and Nineteenth-Century Science: The Make-Believe of a Beginning*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1984.
- Skilton, David, ed. *Early and Mid-Victorian Fiction*. London: Routledge, 1993.
- . Introduction. *Lady Audley's Secret*, by Mary Elizabeth Braddon. 1862. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1987. vii-xxiii.
- . Introduction. *Orley Farm*. 1862. By Anthony Trollope. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1985. vii-xvi.
- Slakey, Roger L. "Melomotte's Death: A Prism of Meaning in *The Way We Live Now*." *English Literary History* 34: 2 (1967): 248-59.
- . "Trollope's Case for the Moral Imperative." *Nineteenth-Century Fiction* 28: 3 (1973): 305-20.
- Slater, Michael. "Carlyle and Jerrold into Dickens: A Study of *The Chimes*." *Nineteenth-Century Fiction* 24: 4 (1970): 506-26.

- Small, Ian. *Conditions for Criticism: Authority, Knowledge and Literature in the Late Nineteenth Century*. Oxford: Clarendon, 1991.
- Smalley, Donald, ed. *Anthony Trollope: The Critical Heritage*. London: Routledge, 1969.
- Smith, Roger. *Trial by Medicine: Insanity and Responsibility in Victorian Trials*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh UP, 1981.
- Snyder, Charles W. *Liberty and Morality: A Political Biography of Edward Bulwer-Lytton*. New York: Peter Lang, 1995.
- Soderholm, James. *Fantasy, Forgery and the Byron Legend*. Lexington: UP of Kentucky, 1996.
- Sparks, Tabitha. "Fiction Becomes Her: Representations of Female Character in Mary Braddon's *The Doctor's Wife*." Tromp et al. 197-209.
- Spencer, Jane. *Elizabeth Gaskell*. London: Macmillan, 1993.
- Springhall, John. "Disseminating Impure Literature: The 'Penny Dreadful' Publishing Business Since 1860." *Economic History Review* 47: 3 (1994): 567-84.
- Srok, Kenneth M. "Dickens' Metafiction: Readers and Writers in *Oliver Twist*, *David Copperfield*, and *Our Mutual Friend*." *Dickens Studies Annual* 22 (1993): 35-66.
- Stang, Richard. *The Theory of the Novel in England 1850-1870*. London: Routledge, 1959.
- Steig, Michael. "Subversive Grotesque in Samuel Warren's *Ten-Thousand-A-Year*." *Nineteenth-Century Fiction* 24: 2 (1969): 154-68.
- Stewart, Garret. *Dear Reader, The Conscripted Audience in Nineteenth-Century British Fiction*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 1996.
- Stewart, Susan. *Crimes of Writing: Problems in the Containment of Representation*.

Oxford: Oxford UP, 1991.

Stone, Harry. "Dickens and Fantasy: The Case of Uriah Heep." *Dickensian* 75: 388 (1979): 95-103.

Stone, Marjorie. "Dickens, Bentham, and the Fictions of The Law: A Victorian Controversy and its Consequences." *Victorian Studies* 29 (1985): 125-54.

Sucksmith, Harvey Peter. "Dickens Among the Pre-Raphaelites: Mr. Merdle and Holman Hunt's 'The Light of the World.'" *Dickensian* 72: 380 (1976): 158-63.

---. "The Secret of Immediacy: Dickens' Debt to the Tale of Terror in *Blackwood's*." *Nineteenth-Century Fiction* 26: 2 (1971): 145-57.

Sullivan, Sheila. "'What is the Matter with Mary Jane?': Madeleine Smith, Legal Ambiguity, and the Gendered Aesthetic of Victorian Criminality." *Genders* 35 (2002): 1-44. 11 Apr. 2003 <http://www.genders.org/g35/g35_sullivan.html>.

Summers, Montague. "Emma Robinson: Author of *Whitefriars*." *Times Literary Supplement* 22 Jan. 1944: 48.

Sutherland, John. "The First Four Emmas." Rev. of *The English Novel 1770-1829*, Vol. 1, ed. James Raven, and Vol. 2 (1800-1829), ed. Peter Garside and Rainer Schowerling. *Times Literary Supplement* 8 June 2001. 11 Aug. 03 <<http://www.the-tls.co.uk/archive>>.

---. "How Criminal Is Melmotte and When Was He Criminalised?" *Who Betrays Elizabeth Bennet? Further Puzzles in Classic Fiction*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1999. 202-10.

---. Introduction. *Is He Popenjoy?* by Anthony Trollope. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1986. vii-xxiv.

---. Introduction. *The Woman in White*. 1860. By Wilkie Collins. Oxford: Oxford UP,

1996. vii-xxiii.
- . "Is Melmotte Jewish?" *Is Heathcliffe a Murderer? Great Puzzles in Nineteenth-Century Literature*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1996. 156-62.
- . *The Longman Companion to Victorian Fiction*. London: Longman, 1988.
- . "Thackeray's Errors." *Victorian Fiction: Writers, Publishers, Readers*. John Sutherland. Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1995. 1-27.
- . "Trollope at Work on *The Way We Live Now*." *Nineteenth-Century Literature* 37: 3 (1982): 472-93.
- . *Victorian Fiction: Writers, Publishers, Readers*. Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1995.
- . *Victorian Novelists and Publishers*. London: Athlone, 1976.
- . "Wilkie Collins and the Origins of the Sensation Novel." *Dickens Studies Annual* 20 (1991): 243-58.
- Swann, Charles. "Wainewright the Poisoner: A Source for Blandois/Rigaud?" *Notes and Queries* 35: 233: 3 (1988): 321-22.
- Sweeney, St. John. "Sheridan Le Fanu, the Irish Poe." *Journal of Irish Literature* 15: 1 (1986): 3-32.
- Taylor, D. J. *Thackeray*. London: Chatto and Windus, 1999.
- Taylor, David. *The New Police in Nineteenth-Century England*. Manchester: Manchester UP, 1997.
- Taylor, Jenny Bourne. *In the Secret Theatre of Home: Wilkie Collins, Sensation Narrative, and Nineteenth-Century Psychology*. London: Routledge, 1988.
- . "Representing Illegitimacy in Victorian Culture." *Victorian Identities: Social and Cultural Formations in Nineteenth-Century Literature*. Ed. Ruth Robbins and Julian Wolfreys. London: Macmillan, 1996.
- Teichman, Jenny. *Illegitimacy: A Philosophical Examination*. Oxford: Blackwell,

1982.

Terry, R. C. *Anthony Trollope: The Artist in Hiding*. London: Macmillan, 1977.

Thomas, Donald. *The Victorian Underworld*. London: John Murray, 1999.

Thomas, Peter. *Detection and Its Designs: Narrative and Power in Nineteenth-Century Detective Fiction*. Athens: Ohio UP, 1998.

Thomas, Ronald R. *Detective Fiction and the Rise of Forensic Science*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1999.

---. "Wilkie Collins and the Sensation Novel." *The Columbia History of the British Novel*. Ed. John Richetti et al. New York: Columbia UP, 1994. 479-507.

Thompson, James. *Models of Value: Eighteenth-Century Political Economy and the Novel*. Durham: Duke UP, 1996.

Thompson, Nicola. "'Something Both More and Less Than Manliness': Gender and the Literary Reception of Anthony Trollope." *Victorian Literature and Culture* 22 (1994): 151-71.

Tillotson, Geoffrey, and Donald Hawes, ed. *Thackeray: The Critical Heritage*. London: Routledge, 1968.

Tillotson, Kathleen. *Novels of the Eighteen-Forties*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1954.

de la Torre, Lillian. "New Light on Smollett and the Annesley Case." *Review of English Studies* 22 (1971): 274-81.

Tracy, Robert. "Reading Dickens' Writing." *Dickens Studies Annual* 11 (1983): 37-59.

---. *Trollope's Later Novels*. Berkeley: U of California P, 1978.

Trodd, Anthea. *Domestic Crime in the Victorian Novel*. Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1989.

---. "The Policeman and the Lady: Significant Encounters in Mid-Victorian Fiction."

Victorian Studies 27: 4 (1984): 435-60.

Tromp, Marlene, et al., ed. *Beyond Sensation: Mary Elizabeth Braddon in Context*.

Albany: State U of New York P, 2000.

---. Introduction. *Beyond Sensation*. xv-xxviii.

Trotter, David. *Circulation: Defoe, Dickens, and the Economies of the Novel*. London:

Macmillan, 1988.

Turner, Mark W. *Trollope and the Magazines: Gendered Issues in Mid-Victorian*

Britain. Basingstoke: Macmillan 2000.

Turner, J. W. Cecil, and A. Ll. Armitage. *Cases On Criminal Law*. 3rd ed. Cambridge:

Cambridge UP, 1964.

Tyson, Nancy Jane. *Eugene Aram: Literary History and Typology of the Scholar-*

Criminal. Hamden, Conn.: Archon, 1983.

Vaughan W., and H. Weston. *David's "The Death of Marat."* Cambridge: Cambridge

UP, 2000.

Vernon, John. *Money and Fiction: Literary Realism in the Nineteenth and Early*

Twentieth Centuries. Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1984.

Von Rosador, Kurt Tetzeli. "Metaphorical Representations of the French Revolution

in Victorian Fiction." *Nineteenth-Century Literature* 43: 1 (1988): 1-23.

Wall, Stephen. "Trollope, Satire, and *The Way We Live Now*." *Essays in Criticism*

37: 1 (1987): 43-61.

Watt, Ian. *The Rise of the Novel*. 1957. London: Hogarth, 1987.

Webby, Elizabeth. "Colonial Writers and Readers." *Cambridge Companion to*

Australian Literature. Ed. Webby. Cambridge: Cambridge UP,

2000. 50-73.

---. "Writers, Printers, Readers: The Production of Australian Literature Before 1855."

Bennett et al., *Penguin New History*. 113-25.

Weiss, Barbara. *The Hell of the English: Bankruptcy and the Victorian Novel*.

London: Associated UP, 1986.

---. "Secret Pockets and Secret Breasts: *Little Dorrit* and the Commercial Scandals of the Fifties." *Dickens Studies Annual* 10 (1982): 67-76.

Welsh, Alexander. *From Copyright to Copperfield: the Identity of Dickens*.

Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard UP, 1987.

---. *George Eliot and Blackmail*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard UP, 1985.

---. *Strong Representations: Narrative and Circumstantial Evidence in England*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 1992.

Wheeler, Michael. *Heaven, Hell, and the Victorians*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1994.

White, James Boyd. *Acts of Hope: Creating Authority in Literature, Law, and Politics*. Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1994.

Who Was Who. A. & C. Black Ltd. Know UK. 5 May 2003

<http://www.knowuk.co.uk/html/about_was.htm>.

Wiener, Martin J. *Reconstructing the Criminal: Culture, Law, and Policy in England, 1830-1914*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1994.

Wills, Adele. "Witnesses and Truth: Juridical Narratives and Dialogism in Wilkie Collins' *The Woman in White* and *The Moonstone*." *New Formations* 32 (1997): 91-108.

Winter, Alison. *Mesmerized: Powers of Mind in Victorian Britain*. Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1998.

Wolff, Robert Lee. "Devoted Disciple: The Letters of Mary Elizabeth Braddon to Sir

- Edward Bulwer-Lytton, 1862-73." *Harvard Library Bulletin* 22 (1974): 5-35, 129-61.
- . *Sensational Victorian: the Life and Fiction of Mary Elizabeth Braddon*. New York: Garland, 1979.
- . *Strange Stories and Other Explorations in Victorian Fiction*. Boston: Gambit, 1971.
- The Woman in White*. Dir. Tim Fywell. BBC. 28 and 29 Dec. 1997.
- Woodring, Carl R. "Charles Reade's Debt to William Howitt." *Nineteenth-Century Fiction* 5: 1 (1950): 39-46.
- Woodruff, Douglas. *The Tichborne Claimant: A Victorian Mystery*. London: Hollis and Carter, 1957.
- Worrall, Simon. *The Poet and the Murderer: A True Story of Literary Crime and the Art of Forgery*. London: Fourth Estate, 2002.
- Wynne, Deborah. "'See What a Big Wide Bed it is!': Mrs. Henry Wood and the Philistine Imagination." *Feminist Readings of Victorian Popular Texts: Divergent Femininities*. Ed. Daniel Duffy and Emma Liggins. Aldershot: Ashgate, 2001.
- . *The Sensation Novel and the Victorian Family Magazine*. Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2001.
- Zedner, Lucia. *Women, Crime, and Custody in Victorian England*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991.
- Zipser, Richard A. *Edward Bulwer-Lytton and Germany*. German Studies in America. No. 16. Berne: Herbert Lang, 1974.
- Žižek, Slavoj. *The Sublime Object of Ideology*. 1989. Trans. Jon Barnes. London: Verso, 1999.